Ema. L. Parnish

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF

MRS. MENVILLE.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF ERRORS OF EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH, AND INTRIGUES OF A MORNING.

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WOMAN

AS SHE

SHOULD BE.

LETTER I.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ. TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I Am confoundedly vexed and diſappointed; I have ſeen and conveyed a line to Mrs. Menville; I have this morning received the moſt chilling anſwer poſſible; ſhe will not accept the ſervices of a ſtranger; "her ſtay in the caſtle may be very ſhort;" What can ſhe mean by that; has ſhe heard again from Menville? I know not what to think, but I am determined this evening to write in my own name; her delicacy may be hurt, but I hope her confidence in me will be ſtrengthened, when ſhe knows I only wiſh to convey her to her friends. I have ſeen nothing of Bailey yet, but I perſuaded my landlord to go to the caſtle this morning, and invite him over. Perhaps, Jack, you will not give me the credit of a diſintereſted friendſhip, yet I ſwear to you,

I have no ſiniſter views, no duplicity in my intentions, ſudden as my reformation may appear, 'tis becauſe I never met with a woman ſo truly reſpectable before, and I will ſerve her to the hazard of my life and fortune. I have this moment parted from Bailey, he luckily called before Tregegle went out, and was introduced to me. I aſked him if he knew of any eſtate in that neighbourhood to be diſpoſed of?

"Not juſt now," he ſaid, "but he believed Trewarne Caſtle might be let, if that would ſuit me, for he had received a letter from his maſter the day before, and he talked about letting the eſtate, becauſe he was going abroad."

"Could I ſee the houſe," I aſked.

"Why, yes, I believe I may venture to ſhew all but one room, if your honour pleaſes to come over to-morrow morning; I am going into Penzance now, to take a place for one of our maids, lately come from London, and now ſhe's in a hurry to go back again."

I aſſured him of calling over in the morning, and now I ſhall write a line to acquaint Mrs. Menville of my deſign, and entreat permiſſion to ſee her.

Never was any thing ſo provoking, I have walked all the evening before the gardens to no purpoſe; Mrs. Menville never appeared, and if to-morrow I ſhould ſee her ſuddenly, I ſhall run the riſk of her diſpleaſure perhaps, beſides exciting ſuſpicion in the man; yet venture I muſt and will. Her delicacy has taken the alarm at my letter, and ſhe has declined her evening walks. Adieu, Jack, I am deviliſhly vexed.

Well, all is diſcovered—but you ſhall hear. I went at the appointed hour to Trewarne, Bailey

ley was ready to receive me; he conducted me through the gloomy apartments, ſo large, dark and uncomfortable, the furniture ſo ſhabby, and every part looking ſo cold and comfortleſs, that I had almoſt a fit of an ague upon me. We paſt one room, which he ſaid was faſtened up; my heart was at my mouth, for I ſuppoſed Mrs. Menville was there, and it was plain he thought ſo too, for having paſſed the door, and looked around the houſe, we walked into the gardens, which are extenſive, but in very indifferent order. Turning ſuddenly round through a little ſhrubbery, on a garden chair was ſeated Mrs. Menville, with her child on her lap, ſhe was careſſing the ſweet infant; 'tis impoſſible to paint her ſurpriſe, or my confuſion; ſhe ſtarted up,

"Good God! Mr. Martin?"

"I beg your pardon," ſtammered I, "I can ſcarce believe my ſenſes; is it poſſible Mrs. Menville can be here?"

I turned my eyes on Bailey, the man looked gloomy and ſuſpicious.

"Yes, ſir," replied ſhe, "I reſide here at preſent, and do not receive any viſits; whether buſineſs or chance brought you to this houſe, you muſt know the impropriety of any gentleman being ſeen here in the abſence of Mr. Menville. I wiſh you, ſir, a good morning."

She motioned to go, "Stay, madam, one minute," cried I, hurried out of all caution, "I beſeech you tell me how I can ſerve you."

"You are very kind, ſir, but I have no ſervices to requeſt of you."

"Sir," ſaid Bailey, "you are not the gentleman I thought you. Tregegle ſaid your name was Chambers; I don't underſtand this buſineſs."

" 'Tis of little conſequence," I replied.

" To me, Mr. Martin," ſaid Mrs. Menville, it is of conſequence; you muſt bear me witneſs I knew nothing of your being in this country, nor can I, ſir, permit, nor will I ſee you again, however obliged I may be to your intentions."

She then quickly withdrew. Mortified as I was, it inſtantly occurred to me I had beſt make a friend of Bailey, therefore turning to him, " Come, Mr. Bailey, go with me to Tregegle's, and I'll explain this affair to you; the man ſeemed irreſolute, but curioſity, I ſuppoſe, induced him to acquieſce with my requeſt; he followed me home. I then frankly explained the whole buſineſs, only gave him to underſtand I was there at the requeſt of Mrs. Menville's friends. The man ſeemed loſt in thought, but after a little pauſe,

" She ſeems a very good natured lady; is pleaſed with every thing, and gives no trouble, and to be ſure, 'tis a very cruel thing to her, that a madam ſhould be kept like a lady, and his lady ſent down here, poor ſoul; and to tell you the truth, I have ſtopt all her letters by maſter's orders, though it went againſt my conſcience too."

" And where are thoſe letters," ſaid I, haſtily.

" At home, ſir, and I intended Mrs. Ann ſhould take them up with her."

" No, no, my good friend, ſend them to the poſt, you are liable to be taken up for felony, if you detain them."

" For felony, ſir! Lord bleſs my ſoul, I'll carry them away this very night, and I am reſolved madam ſhall do what ſhe pleaſes, and as you come from her friends, ſir, you are very welcome if ſhe likes to ſee you."

I ſtrook

I ſhook his hand heartily, with a *couple* of irreſiſtible *arguments*, which I ſaw poured conviction into his heart. But after all, if ſhe will not permit me to ſee, or ſerve her, of what uſe is my being here; yet *here* I *will* ſtay, 'till I hear ſhe is comfortable, or until ſhe removes, which doubtleſs ſhe will if he goes abroad. Would to heaven he and his dulcenea might ſink into the deep, never to riſe again; pardon me, Jack, but if you knew the two women, you would join moſt cordially in the wiſh, and curſe the circe that has wounded the boſom of an angel. I am going to write, my friend Bailey has promiſed to deliver the letter, and I will yet hope I may be admitted to her preſence.

Well, Jack, I may retrace my ſteps back to London, or go to the devil if I will, for not the leaſt favour can I obtain of this dear cautious woman. I told you I would write, this is my anſwer, unſealed, to prove, I ſuppoſe, ſhe had no ſecrets.

" Mrs. Menville preſents her compliments to Mr. Martin, is much obliged to him for his particular enquiries after her health, which is much amended by the country air, hopes he will pardon the *ſeeming* incivility of declining his viſits, as ſhe has made it a fixed rule to ſee no company during her reſidence at Trewarne Caſtle."

Thus all hopes of an interview are at an end; ſhe walks no more on the terrace; will receive no company at the houſe, nor dare I preſume to force myſelf into her preſence; yet here I ſtay, and ſhall gain all the intelligence I wiſh for from Bailey, who is now my faſt friend. Lord! Lord! Jack, that ever I ſhould dwindle into the humble attendant of a truly virtuous female, after being

for

for five or ſix years, the gay, the admired, the ſucceſsful Bob Martin. Ah! woman, woman! born to make mankind your ſlaves; were you but ſenſible of your own worth, preſerved your conſequence, and to the beauties of your perſons, added the more faſcinating charms of virtue! How is my ſelf-love mortified ſince I have known this charming creature! gallantries, purſuits which I thought venal crimes, now appear to my view, attended with the meaneſt duplicity, the blackeſt, moſt treacherous deſigns, that the moſt contemptible of men could be guilty of. I look back on the fate of poor Mary Smith, with the deepeſt contrition, and muſt honeſtly confeſs, that the man who endeavours by his attentions and avowed preference, to gain the heart of an innocent amiable girl, carefully avoiding declarations, vows, or proteſtations, which may give her a legal claim upon him, at the ſame time his behaviour in private is ſo unequivocal, as to inſpire affection in the unſuſpecting girl, obtain her affection, and then triumph in the gratification of his vanity; ſuch a man is a villain, deſerves to be reprobated by the whole ſex, and will one day or other feel the ſtings of conſcience as I do now. Yet there are many of thoſe male coquets, thoſe contemptible danglers, that ruin the peace of families, and ſink the injured victim to the grave. Poor Mary Smith! my feelings painfully inform me, I have much to regret, and great reparation to make, before I can procure peace to myſelf.

There is one ſervice, however, which I have rendered Mrs. Menville, although ſhe knows it not, that of cauſing her letters to go forward, and as I every day expect news from London, I may furniſh her with intelligence through Bailey,

that

that may be of ſervice to her. Didſt ever expect Jack to hear that I was devoted to the ſervice of a virtuous woman? ſuch miracles were alone reſerved for Mrs. Menville to effect; and I have ſo much regard for you, that I heartily wiſh thou may'ſt meet with ſuch another, if ſuch there be, to convert thee alſo.

I have this inſtant received a letter from Williams. Menville is done up; his loſſes are conſiderable, he is preparing to go abroad, and ſelling his eſtates to realize all the money he can; let him go, he muſt ſupport his wife decently, and ſhe can have no cauſe to regret his abſence. I ſhould ſuppoſe, from the hint ſhe dropped, "that her ſtay will not be long in the caſtle," ſhe deſigns to remove from thence, when her huſband (curſe on the name!) quits England. Prithee tell me Jack, from whence originated thoſe arbitrary laws, which make the elopement of a wife ſinful and ſcandalous, are a foundation for a divorce, and brand a woman with everlaſting infamy; yet man, that Lord of the creation, who boaſts ſuperior wiſdom; who, if his word from man to man ſhould dare to be queſtioned, would riſk his life, his future happineſs in another world, to revenge the inſult, can with impunity violate the moſt ſolemn vows, injure another in the deareſt part, deſtroy the peace of an amiable woman, and make two families wretched; yet this man ſhall only be a man of ſpirit and gallantry, congratulated by his aſſociates on his ſucceſs, and received by the female world without reproach. Surely, ſurely we are too partial to our own vices! I muſt now go in ſearch of Bailey, and communicate my intelligence. Farewell, I give thee

leave

leave to laugh, but I am proof againſt all thy ridicule.

Sincerely your's,

ROB MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

My unknown, "diſintereſted friend," is at laſt diſcovered; would you think it poſſible Martin ſhould engage in ſuch a romantic expedition? yet upon my word ſo it is. His deſigns for coming here, and aſſuming a diſguiſe both in perſon and name, are beſt known to himſelf, but I have ſo little faith in the friendſhip of men, that I ſhall moſt undoubtedly refuſe every attention from him, nor will I permit his viſits on any account. He introduced himſelf into the houſe, under a pretence of taking it, as Bailey tells me his maſter has thoughts of letting the eſtate altogether; he came upon me accidentally in the garden, and I was moſt exceedingly ſurpriſed and diſconcerted; however, I gave him to underſtand civilly, but firmly, that I could hold no converſation, and left him to tell his own ſtory to the ſervant, which he certainly did to his own advantage, for this morning Bailey told me, he found the ſtrange gentleman came from my friends, and therefore

I might ſee him when I pleaſed. I told him I ſhould ſee no company whilſt I remained here, and he would do well to obey his maſter's orders.

" Dear heart, madam, I am ſure you are angry, but I did not know, 'till the gentleman told me, how cruelly you have been uſed, and I aſk your pardon if I have behaved ill."

" No, my good friend, you have not behaved ill, on the contrary, I think myſelf obliged for your kindneſs, and approve of your obedience to Mr. Menville's commands."

He bowed reſpectfully, and left the apartment ſaying, " Gracious Lord, was ever the like."

I am extremely uneaſy at not receiving a line from you yet, and very apprehenſive my letters are ſtopt; I think I will queſtion Bailey on the ſubject. Well, my dear friend, 'tis as I ſuſpected, the letters have been ſtopped by Mr. Menville's orders, but the man confeſſes that the ſtrange gentleman " told him he was a felon for doing it, and ſo he ſent them all away yeſterday, for there was no reaſon maſter ſhould make a felon of him, when thank God he was an honeſt man." I own this is a piece of ſervice, for which I am thankful to Mr. Martin, and gives me a better opinion of him than I before entertained; my mind is relieved from many doubts, and you, I am ſure, muſt have been very uneaſy. Good God! an expreſs from Mr. Menville.

I have a moſt inhuman letter, I will not repeat it to you—he reproaches me ſeverely indeed, but he ſhall not alter my purpoſe; it only convinces me of the neceſſity of adhering firmly to my reſolution, never to give up my jointure. A perſon calls on me to-morrow, by his orders; he will allow me *one* hundred a year, and I may

live

live where I pleaſe; Trewarne caſtle is advertiſed for ſale, and the ſooner I quit it the better; he will never forgive my obſtinacy, or ſee me more. Oh! my dear, 'tis very hard thus to be caſt off for ever from a huſband's love, thrown on the world, to be the ſport of a thouſand illnatured tongues, a thouſand ſcandalous conjectures on my conduct, which nobody will believe to be free from blame; when I am deſerted by a man who doated on me, who married me from affection only, and can ſo ſoon give me up for ever. No! 'tis impoſſible I can eſcape cenſure, and my reputation *muſt* ſuffer in the eyes of the world. I have ſhed a torrent of tears over my ſweet child, ſhe has now but one parent to preſerve and watch her tender years, and ſhield her from the world's oppreſſion. I am thankful for the allowance Mr. Menville has given me, 'tis ſufficient to ſupport me in the way I ſhall chuſe to live—at preſent I can write no more.

Mr. Menville's agent has been with me; every thing is concluded, and I have received a hundred pounds, as the firſt year's allowance, and another note of equal value, as a *preſent*, to pay the expences of my removal; I did not think proper to refuſe it, and having nearly two hundred pounds of my own, I am you ſee a rich woman.

I have enquired out for a girl, to aſſiſt me in the care of my child, which is the only ſervant I ſhall keep. Ann is this morning gone to London, and I ſhall leave this place alſo in a few days, do not write therefore. Bailey and Suſan are much afflicted, and have both offered to attend me, but that cannot be. I have written to

Mr.

Mr. Menville, without any obſervations on the cruel parts of his letter; I only lamented the loſs of his affection, and grieve that I cannot, conſiſtent with what I think is my duty as a mother, comply with all his wiſhes; I thank him for the income he has ſettled on me, and aſſure him I ſtill look forward with hope that we may one day be re-united; mean time it ſhall be my ſtudy to deſerve his love, by devoting myſelf to the care of his dear child. This was nearly the purport of my letter, and now adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I ſhall write no more from this place, although from the ſituation of my mind, it is more congenial to my feelings, than the moſt delightful ſpot in nature could be, but wherever I am, I ſhall never ceaſe to be

Your truly affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.
TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I Shall turn out a Don Quixote in good earneſt, and you may expect ſoon to ſee publiſhed the wonderful atchievments of the renowned Robert Martin, Knight of the moſt beautiful lady in the world. After all, Chambers, this is but a copy of my countenance, for I am in a horrid ill humour. Mrs. Menville has had an expreſs from her huſband; a lawyer has been with her with deeds and parchments, articles of ſeparation I ſuppoſe, but I can gain no intelligence; Bailey ſays ſhe weeps all the day long (curſe on him who gives her cauſe for it) that ſhe is packing up every thing; has hired a young girl as her only attendant, and is preparing to leave them, but where ſhe is going they know not. The lawyer told Bailey, "If that lady was my wife, I would not part with her for a thouſand worlds." I am always on the watch, leſt ſhe ſhould eſcape me, for go where ſhe will, I am determined to be her guardian,

guardian, protector and *guide*, if she will permit me.

She has escaped, in spite of all my caution: hear how she managed whilst my horses are getting ready. This morning she sent Bailey to Penzance with a letter, desiring he would wait for the post, if not come in, as she was very anxious to hear from her friends. The fellow called on me in his way, and told me this, which flung me off my guard, and like a puppy I set myself to write a long letter to Williams, and in short was near three hours employed before I took my usual saunter round the house. All was still, and I waited and walked at least two hours more, before Bailey returned; he had a letter, which I knew was Mrs. Colemore's hand, I bid him go in and deliver it, and then return to me. The man returned indeed frightened out of his wits,

"O Lord! sir, we are all undone."

"How, why, what's the matter," cried I.

"Madam's gone."

"Gone! gone where?"

"Along with the lawyer, sir; Susan says that about a half an hour after I went out, she heard a ringing at the great gate, and when she opened it, the gentleman drove in, in a post chaise, and so madam made the driver fetch down all her trunks, and they were put up to the chaise, except a very great one the gentleman is to send for."

"But where are they gone?" cried I, stamping.

"Why, Lord, sir, that's the thing, Susan can't tell, they all got into the chaise, and Madam gave Susan two guineas, and left two for me, and, sir, she left this letter for you," pulling one out of his pocket.

"Confound

"Confound you," ſaid I, ſnatching it, why "did you not give it me." I tore it open, and found the following contents.

TO ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

Sir,

I cannot leave this country without acknowledging myſelf obliged to your kind intentions in my behalf, though my particular ſituation would not permit me to receive your viſits, nor can I *ever* admit the viſits of any gentleman during Mr. Menville's abſence, wherever I am. You muſt permit me to obſerve that as I am denied the delights of ſociety, from *choice* denied, it will give me very great pain, and in all probability, entirely ruin my future proſpects, by ſubjecting me to malicious obſervations, ſhould any gentleman, how much ſoever my friend, follow me to the retirement I chuſe, and create ſuſpicions which might wound my peace for ever, I flatter myſelf Mr. Martin will ſee the impropriety in the ſame light I do, and then I ſhall always think myſelf obliged to his ſolicitude, and if ever I am reſtored to happineſs, and the boſom of my friends, I ſhall with pleaſure ſee him included in that deſcription.

EMILY MENVILLE.

Thus, Jack, all my hopes and wiſhes are annihilated, for I will obey the angel; not for worlds would I give her pain, or ſuffer the breath of ſlander to wrong her purity. Wherever

ever ſhe is, I may hear of her through Mrs. Colemore, and I am determined to cultivate her friendſhip, and her worthy huſband's; he was once my averſion, but now with different ſentiments of men and manners, my reaſon bids me reſpect him. After I had peruſed the above letter three or four times, I told Bailey ſhe was gone to viſit one of her friends, and did not chuſe to let me, or any one know where. I put a couple of guineas into his hand, returned to my lodgings, ordered my horſes, and ſhall ſet off directly for my return to London. A queer ſort of an expedition this has been, and my romance is ſuddenly brought to a concluſion, without my being able to diſcover whether my mind is moſt pained or pleaſed, there is ſuch a mixture of both; but her dear letter will be for ever valuable, though it repreſſes my wiſhes to ſee and ſerve her. I muſt adore her for the motives which has governed her determination. You will hear from me on my arrival in town, 'till then adieu.

ROBERT MARTIN.

I ſhall take Mrs. Colemore's letter with me.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

'TIS near a fortnight, my dear friend, ſince I wrote to you laſt, and I am now moſt delightfully ſituated in Glamorganſhire, in a ſweet little cottage, with a view of the ſea in front, and a beautiful garden, with riſing hills, at the back of it. My houſe conſiſts of a kitchen, two ſmall parlours, and three rooms over, quite large enough for me; 'tis very neatly furniſhed, and coſts me altogether but ſixteen guineas a year; there are a few common cottages round us, and the gay town of Swanſea is about ſeven miles off, which I ſhall never viſit. You will naturally be ſurpriſed how I came to know of this ſituation; it belongs to the lawyer who managed Mr. Menville's buſineſs; in the courſe of the converſation which paſſed between us, the man, I thought, viewed me with compaſſion and reſpect, and as I happened to ſay I wiſhed much for ſome retired houſe, ſuitable to my ſmall income, he aſked me

if

if I was particular as to ſituation, or diſtance from town, I told him no;

"Should you like Wales?"

"Yes, exceedingly."

"Why then, madam, I have a neat cottage decently furniſhed, and pleaſantly ſituated."

"It is the very thing I ſhould like."

"Then, madam, you may go when you pleaſe, a tenant of mine is now with me, and ſhall be your conductor."

Nothing, my dear Mrs. Colemore, could have happened more opportune, or more agreeable to my wiſhes. We then concerted together the whole plan; I was deſirous to conceal my departure and reſidence equally from Bailey and Mr. Martin, who I had reaſon to ſuppoſe, watched all my motions; I therefore, on the morning Mr. Watſon the lawyer called for me, ſent the former out of the way for three or four hours, and proceeded ſafely on my journey; it was a tedious one, but I arrived in perfect health and ſafety, with my child, and the girl I had taken, and found the houſe and garden much beyond my moſt ſanguine expectations. I am now comfortably ſettled, the air is ſoft and refreſhing, the country beautiful, and unleſs I ſhould be ſo fortunate as to be recalled by Mr. Menville, in all probability I am fixed for a long, long time. You will remember, in the deſcription of my cottage, that I have one ſpare room to accommodate a friend. I hope no letter of your's will arrive at the caſtle during my abſence, if it does I muſt depend on the kindneſs of Mr. Watſon to tranſmit it; he has promiſed to call at the poſt-office, and take up any letters addreſſed to me, which will, I flatter myſelf, prevent their being ſent on

to

to Trewarne. I earneſtly wiſh to know whether Mr. Menville has left England; if the proſecution goes on, and other matters very intereſting to me. Alas! my dear Mrs. Colemore, I endeavour to ſtruggle againſt ſorrow and regret, for loſt happineſs; I wiſh for calmneſs and fortitude to bear thoſe evils I cannot avoid, but I find the taſk is not an eaſy one, for though I do not indulge, yet I cannot repreſs or ſubdue thoſe painful feelings which a wife and a mother muſt endure, at the ſtrange, ſtrange reverſe a few months have produced in my ſituation. Believe me, 'tis not the loſs of ſplendour and riches, which can give me a moment's pain, oh! no, 'tis the unhappy connexion which Mr. Menville has formed, 'tis the loſs of his affection, the injury his character muſt ſuſtain, 'tis the reflection that he cannot find happineſs attainable in his preſent purſuits, and that his boſom muſt be wounded, deeply ſo, whenever the hour of reflection arrives, and when it may be too late to procure peace to himſelf or others. For myſelf, I am as rich as I wiſh to be, my wants are very few, and being aſſured my child will hereafter be provided for, I have only to bring her up in that mediocrity of expectations, that may preclude pride or vanity from taking hold of her mind, and to cultivate that mind, "to teach the young idea how to ſhoot," will henceforth be my only and delightful employment. Will you have the goodneſs to tell me if Anthony is ſtill at Sudbury, or what is become of him; ſtrange that he ſhould entirely deſert a ſiſter who never offended him; it appears as if I was caſt off like an alien from all my family connexions. Let me have the happineſs of hearing from you ſoon, but keep my addreſs a ſecret, for

many

many reaſons, which muſt be obvious; believe me ever

Your affectionate friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Your letter is this moment delivered to me, ſent forward by Mr. Watſon; a thouſand thanks for the affection and anxiety you expreſs; I flatter myſelf this letter will gratify the one, and do away the other.

LETTER

LETTER V.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

THANK heaven, my dear friend, I have at laſt heard from you, we received three letters at once. 'Tis impoſſible to give you an idea of our anxiety on your account, and the very day your letters came to hand, Mr. Colemore propoſed going to town, and to call on Lady Hartwill, or on Menville himſelf. We were almoſt out of our wits with joy when we had the letters, but the contents, particularly of the laſt, has almoſt broken our hearts. You certainly acted with becoming ſpirit and ſtrict juſtice, in refuſing to give up your jointure; I wiſh you had done the ſame by your annual ſettlement; wretch as he is to accept your offer, what meanneſs and injuſtice! but I have ever obſerved, when a man's mind is wholly engroſſed by one ſelfiſh paſſion, he will give up all ſecondary conſiderations, and oftentimes commit the moſt flagrant acts of injuſtice to gratify that ruling paſſion, particularly when vice is the predominant

dominant feature in his character; and be angry if you will, I muſt ſay that I think Mr. Menville that character. When he came to Sudbury, he heard you the theme of univerſal admiration; he muſt have heard too, your particular ſituation; he ſaw you, he loved you, and found gratification to his vanity and conſequence in ſupplanting another; your unworthy uncle, dazzled by riches, was blind to the injuſtice; and your dear parent, ſolicitous to ſecure an independence to his children, was perſuaded, compelled, I may ſay, to aid their deſigns, contrary to his better judgment and goodneſs of heart. Thus the outſet of Mr. Menville's conduct was founded in injuſtice and cruelty; what could be expected from a man, who too evidently was governed by his paſſions only. An angel was an unfit companion for ſuch a man. Like minds cling to each other, Miſs Shepherd, worthleſs, vain, volatile and capricious, was the woman beſt formed to pleaſe him, and a wife whoſe goodneſs and virtue was hourly a reproach to his conſcience, muſt be got rid of at any rate. But let them go, depend upon it, my dear friend, they will find mutual puniſhment in their mutual crimes, and in a ſhort time heartily deteſt each other. Mr. Menville has certainly diſpoſed of all his eſtates, and realized a great deal of money, but I hear he has loſt many thouſands at play, though you, my dear, never ſuppoſed he had that vice—but you was deceived and blind to his faults of every kind; I ſaw too much, but I knew I ſhould not be permitted to make my obſervations to you, and conſequently was obliged to be ſilent; but enough of this, I ſhall write to Lady Hartwill, and inform her of your health and ſituation, and

from

from her may obtain ſome intelligence that may be proper for you to know. If you remove from Trewarne, pray write directly, that we may meet you, for we all join moſt earneſtly (and *will not* take a denial) in requeſting you will oblige us with your company. Oh! how happy will you make us all—my dear, dear friend, appoint your day, and we will meet you with tranſport. My father and mother, who have not been ten miles from Sudbury theſe twelve years, will be of our party for fifty miles at leaſt. Haſten to us my beloved friend, I will nurſe your ſweet little Emily, and all our endeavours will be exerted to make you happy.

Your truly affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

THREE days ſince, my beloved friend, I gave my hand to Sir Charles Wentworth; I knew you would rejoice to hear it, and retired yeſterday to my dreſſing-room, purpoſely to write, when I was prevented by the arrival of your letter, and two, Sir Charles received from England. Never was ſurpriſe and affliction equal to mine, at the contents; you have ſought to deceive me into a belief that you was on a pleaſant excurſion at one of Mr. Menville's ſeats. Could you think we had no friends or correſpondents, to whom your intereſt was dear, that would not inform us better? yes, my unfortunate Emily (no more Menville, I deteſt the name) yes, we know all, know that your worthleſs huſband has that infamous Thurkill in his houſe; that you are baniſhed to the extremity of the kingdom, and that he is going to ruin with all poſſible expedition. Good God! is this the ſituation of a woman, whoſe perſon and mind is unrivalled, whoſe merits would be

be degraded by a compariſon with almoſt any other woman? I am diſtracted, I told Sir Charles, had thoſe letters arrived two days ſooner, I never ſhould have reconciled myſelf to a ſecond marriage. I could tear my hair for vexation, when I think of the diſtance between us, and that it will be at leaſt four months before we ſhall return to England; would to heaven you could come to us, yet I know you cannot: no father, no huſband, no brother to protect you; pardon me for enumerating your cauſes for affliction, I ought not to do that, but I ſcarce know what I write; the only conſolation I can find, is in your ſtrength of mind and uncommon fortitude; that, and the happy conſciouſneſs of not deſerving your unmerited ill treatment, will, I truſt, preſerve your ſpirits and health from being too deeply affected. Your deference to the character of a worthleſs huſband, and generous concern for my feelings, I am perſuaded induced you to conceal from me your ſituation; your kind motives are evident, and I thank you for them, but "ill news flies on eagle's wings," and tales of ſcandal are quickly promulgated from kingdom to kingdom. I am interrupted—oh! my dear friend! and to whom, think you, I was called down? my ſurpriſe, my joy was inexpreſſible! to ſee a much valued acquaintance of mine, the trueſt, warmeſt friend of my Emily's! it was Capt. Harley! He arrived yeſterday at Spa, with a party of friends, ſome of whom are ill, and whoſe ſtories, he ſays, are very extraordinary. He eagerly enquired after your health; my confuſion at the queſtion alarmed him, and I found myſelf under a neceſſity of telling the whole truth, to avoid the ſuſpicion of conceiling ſtill worſe in-

telligence. I will not deſcribe to you his emotions, they were terrible, and I more than once repented having begun my relation, but he kept me to it, and I was obliged to repeat the purport of the letters we had received, without reſerve. I will not tax your ſenſibility, by relating our converſation, for above two hours that he ſtayed with me; juſt as he was about to take leave, Sir Charles came in, I introduced them to each other, Sir Charles received him with a warmth of attention that delighted me; he preſſed him to dine with us,

"Excuſe me, ſir," cried poor Harley, "I am now unfit for company, but I will do myſelf the pleaſure of calling in to-morrow, for indeed, Sir Charles, I muſt draw on Lady Wentworth for the principal pleaſures I can derive from being at Spa, if you will permit me to be a frequent viſitor."

We aſſured him with great truth his company would be a conſiderable addition to our happineſs, and prevailed on him to promiſe he would ſpend the following day with us. It was by mere accident he heard of my being here; he called in at a Coffee-Houſe, and heard one gentleman ſay to another,

"Do you know Sir Charles Wentworth, who was married a day or two ago?"

"I have ſeen him," replied the other, "but have not the honour of his acquaintance. Who did he marry, pray?"

"Mrs. Bertie, the niece of Mrs. Moleſworth, a pretty widow, with a capital fortune."

This ſet Harley enquiring where we reſided, and brought him inſtantly to our lodgings. I

ſhall

ſhall not cloſe this letter 'till after to-morrow, when I am to have ſome account of Harley's friends.

Captain Harley kept his promiſe, and dined with us, but really he looked ſo ill, and eat ſo little, that I was quite diſtreſſed for him; my uncle and Mr. Sackville are charmed with him, and we all regretted that ſuch a man's happineſs ſhould be ſacrificed to the vanity and temporary paſſion of —— I was going to ſay a monſter. Harley ſurpriſed me very much, by informing me he had correſponded with Mrs. Colemore ever ſince he left England. A ſly puſs, ſhe never ſaid a word of it; he is in hourly expectation of a letter from her—ſhe has the hiſtory of his friends I find; pray did ſhe ever mention it to you? He has given me a paper to read, which I ſhall do when I have finiſhed this letter. Keep up your ſpirits my deareſt friend, leave the wild country you are in, take an elegant houſe at Sudbury (if your brother does not offer you his, which I ſuppoſe he will do) live in the boſom of your friends, enjoy yourſelf comfortably, and be aſſured a day of retribution will come, when virtues like your's will be rewarded, and ſhame and contempt, added to remorſe and ſorrow, will ſting the breaſts of thoſe who have wounded your peace. Let me entreat you to write ſoon, no need of reſerve now. I muſt and will know every thing that relates to you. Poor Harley entreats his reſpectful condolements for every ſorrow you feel, happy if he had the power to draw the thorn from yours and plant it in his own boſom. Sir Charles, my uncle, aunt, and Mr. Sackville, all join in love

and admiration of your conduct, with her, who to the laſt hour of her life, muſt be your faithful and affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

FORGIVE me, my amiable friend, that I cannot bring my mind to accord with your wiſhes; I expected no leſs from your kindneſs, than an invitation to your houſe, and I feel equally obliged to you, as if I accepted your friendly offer; but it will not do, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am not fitted for company, my mind is not tuned to the harmony of love and friendſhip; vexation and ſorrow have depreſſed my ſpirits, though it has not entirely ſubdued my mind, but in ſolitude only I find relief. The kind compaſſionating looks of friends would wound more deeply than even reproach or anger could do. In ſhort, here I am unknown, I may indulge every feeling of my heart; no intruding viſitors, no curious eyes examine into the cauſe of my ſorrows, and I can wander for hours by the ſea-ſide, or climb the hills in a calm evening, view the ſun declining ſlowly over the mountains, enjoy the

the ſober twilight, and return unobſerved to my cottage. Such are the pleaſures which give peace to my boſom, and when returning, I claſp my ſweet Emily to my heart, or, ſometimes make her a companion of my walks; tell me, my dear friend, where I can enjoy equal tranquillity? tell me, why I ſhould wound the peace of my friends, without affording the leaſt ray of conſolation to myſelf? it cannot be; in this retirement I find repoſe, in the world I have taſted only the bitterneſs of ſorrow, therefore here I am fixed, perhaps for life. I was called off from my pen by my little girl Patty,

"A poor woman, madam, is taken in a fit at the door."

I haſtened to her, ſhe was indeed in a fit, I was much terrified, but with the help of hartſhorn, water, &c. ſhe recovered; her countenance was pale and ſickly, yet intereſting from a pair of expreſſive eyes; ſhe ſeemed to be about nine and twenty, or thirty; I helped her into the houſe; it was long before ſhe could ſpeak, at length,

"Your charity, madam, has reſtored to life a wretch, little ſenſible of the bleſſing, if it is one, to me 'tis only a pilgrimage of ſorrow."

"I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo," replied I, "health and life were certainly intended as bleſſings, we may, by indulging grief, injure the one, but we ought not to throw away the other, 'tis the gift of the Almighty, and his will only ſhould recall it."

"Ah, madam!" anſwered ſhe, "my ſorrows are of that peculiar kind, that every hour adds bitterneſs to a life of woe."

I ſaw

I ſaw ſhe was extremely weak and faint, I ordered ſome refreſhment, ſhe would only take a cup of milk, and eat one mouthful of bread; after a little time ſhe roſe to take leave.

"Pray how far are you going?" I aſked.

"If poſſible, to Swanſea, madam."

"Have you friends there?"

"No, madam, but I am out of ſervice, and have been ill, 'tis now the watering ſeaſon, and I hope to get a ſituation as nurſe maid; I have a recommendation to a lady there."

"I wiſh," ſaid I, with ſome earneſtneſs, "I wiſh I could keep you myſelf, I feel intereſted for you, but I cannot afford to pay you as you deſerve.

"Dear madam," ſaid ſhe, claſping her hands, "talk not of payment, give me a little food, and a coarſe gown to cover me, 'tis all I aſk for."

"This is extraordinary indeed," I replied, "but far be it from me to take any advantage of your diſtreſſed ſituation; if, as you appear rather in a weak ſtate of health at preſent, you have an inclination to ſtay with me for a few days or weeks, I ſhall with pleaſure receive you."

"Is it poſſible, madam," ſaid ſhe, "you can have ſo much conſideration for a perfect ſtranger, whoſe character and connexions you know nothing of, and ſuch is my unfortunate ſituation, that I dare not appeal to either the one or the other, but merely to the recommendation of the lady I laſt lived with."

"To be unfortunate is a ſufficient claim upon thoſe who have any ſenſibility and compaſſion," replied I, "and therefore if you like to ſtay with me 'till you are in better health, and fit to undergo the fatigues of ſervitude, you are exceedingly

ingly welcome." The poor creature burſt into tears of gratitude, and I found, in the courſe of an hour's converſation, that ſhe was ſenſible and well informed; ſhe ſaid ſhe was the daughter of a clergyman, who dying, left little or nothing for his children; that *her* particular misfortunes originated from her own imprudence, which had unhappily involved others very dear to her, ſhe was therefore content to ſuffer, conſcious that ſhe too juſtly merited every evil that had befallen her. Perhaps you will blame me, my dear Mrs. Colemore, for receiving a ſtranger into my houſe ſo haſtily; frigid caution indeed might have ſuggeſted doubts and ſuſpicions, and I may be wrong, yet there was ſomething in this young woman's countenance that intereſted me, and her candour in acknowledging ſhe has been imprudent, deſerves ſome confidence, and I muſt hope I ſhall be juſtified to myſelf for offering her my ſmall accommodation.

I have this moment a letter from Mrs. (I mean from Lady) Wentworth, the contents have ſurpriſed and pained me; ſhe has met with Captain Harley at Spa, with ſome friends, of whoſe hiſtory he ſays you are well informed. I am very much concerned, ſome officious perſon has wrote Sir Charles Wentworth every thing relative to Mr. Menville and myſelf, which has given my friends a great deal of uneaſineſs, and what is ſtill worſe, Lady Wentworth has communicated the whole to Captain Harley, the laſt man on earth to whom I would wiſh to have my ſituation known. Thank heaven, ſhe does not know the narrowneſs of my income, and I beſeech you, if your correſpondence is continued with Captain Harley, that you will not mention it;

it, I ſicken at the idea of giving him pain, or being conſidered by him as an object of compaſſion, and I hope this is the laſt time I ſhall have occaſion to mention his name. Make my warmeſt acknowledgments to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, for their intended kindneſs; whilſt I have the gratification to know I am eſteemed by ſuch worthy characters, and enjoy the friendſhip of Mrs. Colemore and Lady Wentworth; whilſt I can examine my own heart without fear or reproach; whilſt my dear child continues well, and my income is ſufficient for all my wants; whilſt I enjoy ſo many bleſſings, it would be the baſeſt ingratitude to indulge a repining ſpirit, and I truſt I ſhall ever be thankful to the Almighty for the good I enjoy, and ſupport the evil with patience and reſignation. My cottage is delightful, the garden a paradiſe of ſweets, and the proſpect from the hills behind, truly pictureſque and beautiful; nothing is wanting to render it compleat, but the company of my friends. I will not deſpair, but that I may one day or other enjoy that deſirable addition. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, my affectionate reſpects to your good huſband; you are not ſo faſhionable a wife as to be offended at the word,

I am ever your's,

Sincerely and affectionately,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER VIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I WRITE immediately on the receipt of your's, to complain, to ſcold you, my unkind correſpondence, for ſo cruelly diſappointing us. We had ſet our hearts upon having you with us; and now, not content with rejecting the ſociety of your friends, you have ſettled at an immenſe diſtance, purpoſely that you may not be troubled with our company. But you may depend upon a puniſhment adequate to your crime. You know, "if the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet muſt go to the mountain." Mr. Colemore and myſelf are abſolutely determined on a journey into Wales, ſo ſee what you will profit by your obſtinacy.

I am happy to hear Mrs. Bertie is become Lady Wentworth. As to the circumſtance of her meeting an old acquaintance, I expected it, becauſe his laſt letter informed me of his intended route. The hiſtory of thoſe friends you ſhall know;

know; ſcrupulous as you are, you muſt hear a ſtory which does him honour, although the circumſtances are truly melancholy. But of that another time.

Your brother Anthony called on my father laſt week, to ſettle ſome buſineſs previous to his going abroad with a young nobleman. Mr. Menville having declined acting as a truſtee, my father adviſed him againſt a ſcheme which he thought the mediocrity of his income was not equal to: but the gentleman was tenacious of his rights, and would not be reaſoned out of his frolic; ſo at length 300l. a year is allowed him, and a world of good advice given, which I ſaw might well have been ſpared. My father aſked, "Did he not intend ſeeing his ſiſter before he left England?

"He had not time; he heard ſhe was very well at one of Mr. Menville's ſeats."

"No, Sir," ſaid my father, with ſome ſeverity, "Mrs. Menville is not at any houſe of her huſband's. He has thought proper to ſeparate himſelf from her, and ſhe has buried herſelf in a ſmall cottage near Swanſea."

"Indeed!" replied the unfeeling wretch; "I think ſhe has acted very wrong to diſoblige Mr. Menville; to be ſure, he conducted his affair awkwardly; but if every woman took it to heart, becauſe her huſband had a little affair of gallantry, there would be few married couples live together, he believed. For my part," continued he, "I ſhall not interfere between man and wife: and the beſt thing ſhe can do, is to be blind to what ſhe cannot prevent."

My father was abſolutely in a rage: he gave the young man ſuch a lecture, and in ſuch terms,

as,

as, I think, he will not eaſily forget or forgive. They parted on very ill terms. The houſe is let to a gentleman for an occaſional reſidence, as he lives moſtly in town. Your eſtate is let on a long leaſe to a Colonel Huntley. The Shepherds are gone to Boulogne; and it is generally believed he has done pretty well for himſelf at Mr. Menville's expence. Another circumſtance I muſt tell you, which is, that your huſband actually gave 5000l. with Mrs. Thurkill: the old woman, on her return to Sudbury, boaſted of it to ſome of her intimates in confidence; *and in confidence* it has made its way round the neighbourhood. I always ſuſpected there was ſome deception in that buſineſs. Mr. Menville and his lady miſtreſs left town laſt Monday for Paris. The trial comes on this week.

The ſtory you mention of the young woman you have received into your houſe is plauſible, to be ſure, and her ſituation pitiable. I will not give you my thoughts on the protection you have offered her, becauſe, like moſt ſagacious folks, I will judge by the event: but your motive was doubtleſs pure benevolence, and I hope ſhe will deſerve your kindneſs.

And now, my dear Mrs. Menville, prepare yourſelf to receive very ſoon a torrent of reproaches; and take care I find your boaſted Paradiſe all you have deſcribed it to be, otherwiſe, depend upon it, you will be taken priſoner, and carried off by force of arms. I do not requeſt an anſwer to this letter, becauſe a perſonal intercourſe will be more gratifying. Heavens bleſs you till we meet.

Your affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

A letter

A letter from town this moment.—The trial came on yeſterday. Mr. M. is caſt in 5000l. damages! Before I could cloſe my letter, I was informed Mr. Martin was below, and requeſted permiſſion to wait on me, I accordingly admitted him: he apologized for his intruſion, and delivered me a letter, which I find came to hand the day you left the Caſtle, and which I had entirely forgotten to enquire about, though I recollected you acknowledged the receipt of one letter only from me at that time. He acquainted me with his whole peregrination into Cornwall, execrated Mr. Menville, and then run into a long detail about himſelf, made me quite a father, or more properly ſpeaking, a mother-confeſſor. My angel friend had converted him; were all women like her, men would never be villains.

"Pretty doctrine that," ſaid I; "you want to make the females anſwerable for all the crimes and follies you commit; you are both tempter and accuſer. But pray, how could woman err, if man did not, like the inſidious ſerpent, pour poiſon in her ear? Even the deſpicable Mrs. Thurkill, frivolous, vain, and capricious by nature, preſerved her character, till that blind, unworthy Menville ſeduced her from rectitude and virtue."

"Oh do not mention them," cried Martin: "I deteſt *them*. But tell me, dear Madam, how does Mrs. Menville do? Is ſhe at Sudbury with you?"

"No, indeed," I replied, "ſhe will not honour us ſo far; nor am I at liberty to acquaint any body with her place of reſidence. I ſhall, however, ſoon viſit her, and will make known to her the kind intereſt you take in her affairs, and

and the wonderful reformation ſhe has made in your manners. I hope, too, your preſent good reſolutions will be laſting."

"I hope ſo, too," he ſaid; "and he had one powerful motive which would oblige him to watch over his future conduct, the hope of deſerving the eſteem of Mrs. Menville and her friends; and then I will preſume to requeſt the honour of being admitted as a friend by Mr. and Mrs. Colemore."

"I do aſſure you, Mr. Martin," anſwered I, very ſeriouſly, "it gives me very ſincere pleaſure to hear you talk ſo; and both Mr. Colemore and myſelf will be always happy to ſee you."

"This permiſſion, Madam, is what I earneſtly wiſhed for. You are going to viſit Mrs. Menville: when ſhall you return to Sudbury?"

"In leſs than a month," I replied: "leave your addreſs, and Mr. Colemore will readily, I am ſure, write you a line on our return."

The man was quite delighted, and took leave with the higheſt reſpect, and a thouſand good wiſhes for the *charming* Mrs. Menville.

I congratulate you, my dear, on your proſelyte. You have really done wonders,—tamed a wild monſter, (for ſuch I have been informed he was amongſt our ſex,) and turned a lion into a lamb.—Once more adieu.

LETTER IX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I HAVE received your kind letter, my deareſt Charlotte. Permit me to make my warmeſt congratulations to you and Sir Charles on your happy union: 'tis an union of hearts, approved by reaſon, and confirmed by the merits of both parties; there is little doubt, therefore, to be entertained of its ſtability; and in the felicity of my friends I ſhall ever find my own.

That you ſhould have ſuffered any uneaſineſs on my account, gives me real pain; for, indeed, my much-loved friend, I am not the unhappy being you ſuppoſe me to be. I am pleaſantly and comfortably ſettled, my ſweet child improves every day, and I look forward with hope and tranquillity to ſtill happier days; to the time when reaſon will re-aſſume her empire, and a baneful influence, which at preſent embitters our hours, will be no more; when the father of my Emily will return, and embrace with tranſport a wife

wife and child, dearer to his heart than ever from a temporary ſeparation. Let me entreat you, therefore, my dear Lady Wentworth, whenever you ſpeak of Mr. Menville, to conſider him as the huſband of your friend; enumerate his virtues, but be his errors forgotten. A time will come, I know it will, when he will deſerve your eſteem; and if *I* forgive him, who has a right to condemn him?

I expected in this retired ſituation to have remained entirely unknown. Chance threw me yeſterday in the way of a perſon that, of all others, I would have avoided, Lord Longfield. I was taking a ſolitary walk with my child and a young woman who lives with me yeſterday morning, on the top of the hill behind my houſe. We had rambled ſome time, admiring the beautiful proſpects, when a pointer ran paſt us, and preſently we heard a whiſtle calling him back. We turned, and ſaw a gentleman walking ſlowly after us with a fowling-piece in his hand. He quickly overtook us; and bowing as he paſſed, I was aſtoniſhed to ſee Lord Longfield.

"Good God!" cried he, "Mrs. Menville!"

"I hope your Lordſhip is well," ſtammered I.

"Dear Madam," ſaid he, "what a fortunate rencounter is this. Little did I expect the happineſs of ſeeing you in Wales, when I was informed you reſided in Cornwall."

"*I have* been in Cornwall, my Lord, and my reſidence here has been of ſhort duration."

"May I be permitted to aſk, Madam, if you live in this neighbourhood?"

"You may, my Lord; the white cottage underneath this hill is my habitation. I came here

here to live entirely ſecluded from all my acquaintance: I admit no viſits; I pay none. The peculiar ſituation in which I ſtand renders either highly improper; and I wiſh to be acquitted to the world, as well as to my own heart."

"I believe, Madam," returned his Lordſhip, "there are no doubts reſpecting Mrs. Menville's propriety of conduct in the breaſt of any one who has the honour to know her; but I reſpect your motives for this excluſion; and, however ardently I may wiſh for an opportunity to wait on you, I would not intrude on a reſolution formed by good ſenſe and delicacy."

"I fell myſelf exceedingly obliged to your Lordſhip; and if ever I am happy enough to open my doors to my friends, I ſhall be honoured to include Lord Longfield in that deſcription."

He returned a polite anſwer, and with a reſpectful bow took leave, and purſued his walk.

Meeting with him has given me ſome uneaſineſs. I find, on enquiry, he has a ſmall houſe about three miles from hence: 'tis unlucky, for I recollect the malicious reflection Mr. Menville threw out relative to his Lordſhip's viſits in town; and, ſolicitous as I am, that my conduct ſhall ſtand the teſt of every enquiry, the choice of a houſe ſo near him may ſubject me to thoſe cenſures which it moſt behoves me to avoid. Perhaps I had better have gone to Sudbury, and reſided under the eyes of my friends; yet my little income could not have maintained me there. In ſhort, I have nothing to do but to avoid any chance of meeting with his Lordſhip, by giving up my favourite walks on the hill, and reſting on the integrity of my heart, endeavour to be as eaſy as poſſible under my preſent circumſtances.

I am

I am very much concerned you ſhould have found any neceſſity to acquaint Captain Harley with my ſituation. There is a native pride in the human heart that cannot well ſupport the idea of being lowered, either by misfortune or accidental circumſtances, in the opinion of thoſe who once held us in reſpect: and, although from you and Mrs. Colemore I would have no reſerves, yet I cannot ſee that it is at all neceſſary to tax the compaſſion or feelings of others who may not be immediately in my confidence.

Forgive me, my dear Lady Wentworth, if I am petulant: there are perſons from whom I would particularly wiſh to conceal any diſagreeable occurrences, and within your family only would I have my affairs mentioned. It would be affectation not to acknowledge myſelf obliged to Captain Harley for the intereſt he takes in my happineſs; but you muſt ſee the propriety of my requeſt, that my name may be mentioned as ſeldom as poſſible to him, or his to me.

I have this morning received a letter from Mrs. Colemore, which has given me more pleaſure than I could poſſibly expect. She and her worthy huſband are coming to viſit me: 'tis truly kind and conſiderate. They ſhall find I have health and ſpirits to entertain them, without being too great a tax on their ſenſibility and goodnature.

You did not in your laſt letter mention the ſtate of your uncle's health. I hope, therefore, he is the better for his journey. To him, your worthy aunt, the good Mr. Sackville, indeed, to all my friends, preſent my beſt reſpects: and do

do you, my deareſt Lady Wentworth, aſſure yourſelf and Sir Charles, that I am in every ſituation,

Your faithful,

And unalterable,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER X.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

WITHOUT having, or indeed expecting yet any anſwer to my laſt letter, now that I know how to addreſs you, I muſt ſcribble every little occurrence that I think will amuſe you. Two days ago, at Captain Harley's requeſt, ſeconded by my own inclination, I called to ſee Mr. and Mrs. Neville, the Captain's friends: the worthy Clayton is alſo of the party. I was very ſenſibly affected on entering the apartment. Mr. Neville is very far gone in a decline; his amiable wife looks the image of grief and deſpair. They expreſſed themſelves in ſuch handſome terms on what they called the honour I did them, that I found myſelf extremely prejudiced in their favour. Indeed, their appearance is prepoſſeſſing, exceedingly delicate, gentle in their manners, and that look of reſtrained ſorrow which catches the heart, and awakens all your ſenſibility. With what grateful

grateful delight did they dwell on the virtues of Captain Harley, when he occaſionally left the room. The three ſweet children call him at every word, my dear ſir, my dear papa Harley! He has told them they are his children, and they really pay more attention to him and to his commands than they do to their parents.

It would have been a mere compliment to have aſked a return of my viſit; for Mr. Neville is too weak and ill to go out, and his lady would not be abſent an hour, I dare ſay, for the world. I therefore only requeſted permiſſion to wait on them ſometimes, and that I might ſee the children often; both which requeſts were readily accorded to with a thouſand polite acknowledgments.

If Harley could derive any happineſs to himſelf from outward circumſtances, he muſt doubtleſs be gratified by the affection and gratitude of thoſe worthy people; but it is evident there is a corroding care at his heart, which precludes pleaſure or tranquillity. The good Clayton is indeed the Pylades to this Oreſtes; I never ſaw a ſtronger attachment: he laments his diſappointments and ill health with the affection of a brother. Of a brother, did I ſay? An elegant female writer ſays, "A *friend* will always be a *brother*, but a brother is not always a friend." A truth we ſee too many inſtances of to controvert.

A very faſcinating young man was yeſterday introduced to me by the name of Mr. Manſel, whoſe ſtory being ſomething ſimilar to Martin's, I muſt relate to you.—This gentleman has a genteel, though not a large fortune; pleaſing in his perſon, inſinuating in his manners, was generally a favourite with the ladies, and where he thought it

it worth while to take pains to pleaſe, ſucceeded but too well. Several girls ſucceſſively were captivated, and fancied themſelves the favourite fair. Two worthy young women ſuffered ſeverely from their credulity. He never ſpoke of *love*, but his attentions were ſo marked, his looks, his ſighs, his jealouſy of others appeared to ſpeak an unequivocal language. One of theſe ladies, in a diſtant country, gave up her heart without reſerve, and daily expected an open declaration of making her his wife. An offer was made him to travel with a friend: he embraced it without heſitation; yet apparently was hurt at parting with the lady, made a thouſand profeſſions of unalterable eſteem, and—left her to return no more. She, miſerable and unhappy, ſtill retains the affection ſhe had ſo long indulged, and pines away in hopeleſs anguiſh. Several others have been ſacrifices to his pernicious vanity of ſeducing the affections of amiable young girls, without affording them the power to charge him with broken vows.

Some months ago he followed a young girl, whoſe family had met with misfortunes, and had been under obligations to him, (for he is really generous and benevolent, they ſay.) This young creature, with the beſt heart in the world, had ſeen but little of mankind; ſhe felt grateful for his kindneſs to her family; ſhe was gratified by his very particular attentions to her; her heart was deeply impreſſed with love, almoſt without knowing it. He ſaw, enjoyed the diſcovery, and encouraged it by the moſt marked particularity and avowed preference: yet in the warmeſt moments of that preference, he was always on his guard; and though his looks, his actions, ſpoke volumes of affection, yet no expreſſion eſcaped

caped him that could, in his own opinion, be looked on as a claim on himſelf. For ſome months things went on in this manner; the young lady's acquaintances expected every day to congratulate her. Her own family, indeed, thought otherwiſe, and endeavoured to contradict the general opinion, by aſſuring her it was friendſhip only. A party of friends going abroad, he propoſed being one of the number, took leave of the poor girl with the utmoſt *ſang froid* imaginable, profeſſing, nevertheleſs, a wonderful deal of friendly good will for her. She felt the blow ſeverely, but, bleſt with an uncommon reſolution and fortitude, ſhe ſtifled all appearance of vexation and grief from her friends; and, conſidering his conduct in a right point of view, was above ſacrificing her peace to his vanity. She very ſoon got the better of her attachment, and proves herſelf deſerving real eſteem, by the noble efforts ſhe made to conquer an ill-placed affection.

The gentleman, when abroad, ſtill purſued his uſual mode of gaining hearts, till one female, with leſs love and more cunning than others, one evening drew from him an avowal of *love*. She now thought him in her power; ſhe coquetted, ſhe was ſometimes cold, at other times attentive; and by wounding that vanity which had ſo often wounded others, ſhe abſolutely made a conqueſt of his heart. What beauty, merit, and innocence failed to do, was accompliſhed by art and coquetry.

In the mean time, a man of much ſuperior fortune paid his addreſſes to the lady. She gave him her hand; and a few days previous to her marriage, told her quondam lover, that convinced of his *great friendſhip* for her, ſhe knew he would

would rejoice to hear ſhe was ſo ſoon to be well ſettled. He was ſtruck dumb: ſhe left him, nor ſaw him again till ſhe became a bride.

Unable to bear his diſappointment, conſcious of his duplicity to others, which was now retaliated on himſelf, he fled the town, came to Spa, where he has been very ill, and is certainly at preſent in a very bad ſtate of health.

Sir Charles told me this ſtory; and I was not ſorry to hear it, before I thought too well of him; for now I look upon it as a general cauſe, that we females ſhould plague him all we can. There is nothing more deſerving reprehenſion, in my eyes, than a male coquette; a character of that deſcription will tarniſh a thouſand virtues, ſince it originates from a weakneſs unpardonable in a man, and ſcarcely to be tolerated in a woman.

I impatiently expect to hear from you. Tell me you are well and happy, if you wiſh *me* to be ſo.

Your ever affectionate,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

ACCEPT my warmeſt congratulations, deareſt Madam, on your happy union with a worthy man, the object of your choice; and may every ſucceeding year bring with it an increaſe of ſatisfaction. Your obliging letter followed me to Spa, where my friends and ſelf arrived about ten days ſince.

Poor Mr. Neville declines faſt, and is, I fear, in a hopeleſs ſtate. The afflictions of the mind ſoon ſubdue bodily ſtrength. He has been long ſtruggling againſt the diſorder which now makes rapid ſtrides towards a criſis. His amiable wife is ſenſible what the event muſt ſoon be, and endeavours to ſtifle her own diſtreſs, that ſhe may not alarm him. I have procured her the attention of one charming woman, whoſe kind viſits conſole, and often raiſe her ſpirits, when they are ſinking from the melancholy ſcenes before her. That charming woman is Lady Wentworth, whom we have moſt fortunately met with here.

But, what diſtracting information have I received from her! O! Mrs. Colemore, your ſweet friend neglected, deſerted by her huſband, for an object ſo every way inferior; driven from his houſe, and compelled to live on the poor pittance allowed for pocket expences only. Good Heavens! my brain was on fire when I heard the horrible ſtory. She, for whom every man in his ſenſes would have ſacrificed his happineſs and life; ſhe to be deſerted! O! that I could fly to her, that my ſervices could be accepted. But no; I am of all others the moſt reprobated, and hardly dare breathe a wiſh to ſerve her. The only conſolation I had on earth is torn from me, the hope that ſhe was happy; and now what muſt be her feelings? Diſtraction is in the thought. Why, dear Mrs. Colemore, have you ſo induſtriouſly concealed from me the ill treatment ſhe muſt long have ſuffered under: her father dead, Harry gone to India, the other brother a brute, and forſaken by her huſband; thus deprived of all her connexions, without a protector or friend.

Pardon me, dear Madam, for this laſt expreſſion. I know your attachment, and I know that good Doctor Ellis regards her with even a parental fondneſs. Let me hope, then, that you have the amiable ſufferer near you, that you pour the balm of friendſhip to ſooth her woes; and let me moſt earneſtly requeſt the favour of a ſpeedy anſwer; tell me every thing, how ſhe looks, how ſhe bears thoſe evils which have fallen ſo heavily upon her. I would not meet Menville for the world: I know I could not command myſelf; the conſequence would be fatal, and I might add to ſorrows I would die with rapture to preſerve her from.

I can

I can write no more. I endeavoured to calm my ſpirits when I began this letter; but they are now in a ferment. My dear amiable friend, adieu. Preſent my beſt reſpects to Mr. Colemore, with a thouſand thanks for the indulgence he has granted me in your correſpondence. Haſten a few lines to me, if you regard my peace.

I am ever,

Your obliged

And faithful,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER XII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

YOUR letter, my good friend, which I received laſt night, followed me into Wales, where I have been three days arrived on a viſit to Mrs. Menville. Yes, the dear perverſe creature has ſettled herſelf in a ſmall cottage in Wales, reſiſting all our entreaties to be with us, rejecting all the ſervices the moſt perfect friendſhip could offer her, ſhe will live on one hundred a year, and accept no addition from any one. She is rich, ſhe ſays, in ſufficiency for all her wants: they are few indeed. But remember I tell you every thing in confidence. If you ever betray me; if you ever, by word, deed, or look, ſhould chance throw Menville in your way, give him to underſtand you are acquainted with her ſituation, or reſent by any method whatever his behaviour to his wife, you will entirely deſtroy her peace for ever.

ever. Let that conſideration have due weight with you, if ſhe is, or ever was dear to you.

You know Menville has ſold his eſtates, and left the kingdom with that woman Thurkill. The damages awarded againſt him are five thouſand pounds. She is allowed two hundred a year in conſideration of her fortune, half of which was Menville's preſent; for I am well informed their connexion took place ſome time previous to her marriage; and being apprehenſive of conſequences, he thought it beſt to have a convenient ſcreen. He managed matters badly, to be ſure; but they thought themſelves unobſerved. Too much ſecurity begets confidence; and the huſband ſaw too much. He has got rid of an infamous woman;—and ſo ends his hiſtory.

Menville (my heart riſes againſt him) wanted his injured wife to give up her jointure. She had reſolution enough to refuſe, for her child's ſake; but ſhe has, weakly, I think, reſigned her annual ſettlement, and accepted a hundred a year, which is at preſent the whole of her income. Now you know the exact ſtate of her affairs. As to her body and mind, they ſympathize with each other; her ſpirits are depreſſed, but not ſubdued: ſhe ſtruggles to appear cheerful, nay even lively; but *it is* a ſtruggle. The langnor of her countenance, and the faintneſs of her ſmiles, ſhew too plainly a mind ill at eaſe: ſhe is much thinner, but is in tolerable health. She was delighted to ſee us. For my part, I burſt into a flood of tears. "Fye, my dear Mrs. Colemore," ſaid ſhe, "is this the way to make me happy? Do you repent your kind viſit, from which I expect to derive ſo much pleaſure?"

"No,

"No, my beloved friend, that is impoſſible; but I recollect the painful difference between your preſent ſituation, and when we laſt met."

"Not a word on that ſubject," ſaid ſhe. "Some diſagreeable things have happened, to be ſure; but you find me here pleaſantly ſituated, and with a mind reſolved to be ſatisfied with every thing about me. Your preſence conſiderably adds to my ſatisfaction: let me ſee *you* happy, and you will find I have no cauſe which originates from myſelf to make *me* otherwiſe: and depend upon it, my good friend, conſcious rectitude, and an obſervance of our reſpective duties, renders every evil light, and ſtrengthens the mind to bear accidental afflictions."

The dear moraliſt called for her ſweet child: 'tis indeed the counterpart of her charming mother. O, that ſuch a woman, and ſuch a child, ſhould belong to the only man on earth, ſure, that could deſert them! Do you know that I hate your nabobs, accuſtomed to eaſtern indulgencies, a multiplicity of women, a world of ſplendour, their whole attention taken up by accumulating riches, at the expence, too often, of juſtice, mercy, or compaſſion: all the finer feelings of the ſoul are ſubdued. By peculation, by diſtreſſing the unhappy, they acquire the greateſt part of their fortunes; and, with every humane ſentiment expunged, they return with callous hearts to their native country, to dazzle the multitude with their magnificence, and triumph over thoſe who have ten thouſand times more merit, but are leſs beholden to chance or good fortune than themſelves.

That our amiable Emily ſhould have been ſacrificed to a man of this deſcription, is an eternal reflection

reflection on that uncle who now deſerts her. She had no ambitious views; it was to aggrandize others, it was to oblige a parent whom ſhe loved, that ſhe ſubdued a preferable affection, and became the wife of Mr. Menville, and ſuch a wife as any man but him muſt have adored. She will not now permit the leaſt reflection on him. "He is *my huſband*," ſaid ſhe, yeſterday; "reſpect my ſituation, and ſpare my feelings. Conſider he is the father of m child."

Tears came to her eyes, and I implored her pardon.—Adieu: I am called upon for a walk.

My good friend, I have ſuch a diſcovery to make to you, as, I hope, will arrive in time to afford ſome pleaſure to the dying Mr. Neville. On our return from a pleaſant walk by the ſea-ſide, Mrs. Menville received a letter from Lady Wentworth: ſhe retired to read it. I was playing with the child, and converſing with a very amiable young woman, who has been ſome time with our friend, when ſhe returned. I ſaw ſhe had been weeping.

"No ill news, I hope," ſaid I, earneſtly.

"No other," anſwered ſhe, giving me the letter, "than that the amiable and unfortunate man, whoſe ſtory you told me yeſterday, Mr. Neville, is paſt all hopes of recovery."

"Neville!" repeated the young woman, who went by the name of Saunders; "for Heaven's ſake, Madam, what Mr. Neville is that?"

"He is, or rather was, a clergyman," I replied.

She gave me a ghaſtly look, and in a moment fell to the ground. We were exceedingly alarmed, but ſoon recovered her. When able to ſpeak,

"Ah!

"Ah! Madam," ſaid ſhe, "you know his ſtory; had he a ſiſter called Frances?"

"He had," anſwered I; "and the uncertainty of her fate is a great affliction to him."

"Good God!" ſaid ſhe, claſping her hands, "how wonderful is thy Providence, to conduct me to this ſpot. O, ladies, I am the unhappy girl who brought ruin and miſery on my brother and his family, who have wandered from place to place, dragging on a miſerable exiſtence, which I dared not put an end to.

She then begged I would inform her of every thing relative to Mr. Neville, I did ſo. Poor creature! what torrents of tears ſhe ſhed; how earneſtly prayed for bleſſings on that generous man who had reſcued her deareſt relatives from deſtruction. O! that ſhe could be with her dying brother, to obtain his pardon for all the evils ſhe had brought upon him and his dear Lucy.

We endeavoured to ſooth, to comfort her; we aſſured her Mr. Neville never imputed his misfortunes to her; and that pity and concern for her fate, was all that gave him uneaſineſs reſpecting her.

When a little recovered by our tenderneſs and arguments, ſhe ſaid, "It is but right, ladies, you ſhould know every thing that relates to myſelf ſince that fatal hour when I fled from my brother's houſe; and alſo a few circumſtances previous to that unhappy day.

My brother mentioned Mr. Binmore's apparent partiality in my favour. He had indeed profeſſed a violent paſſion for me; and I was much diſpleaſed at the advice my brother gave me on that occaſion.

The

'The ſudden death of Sir Thomas Summers carried his viſitors to town. Mr. Binmore promiſed to write, but I never received a line from him; and the alterations which took place in our family, and removal to my brother's living, gave a new turn to my thoughts, that occaſioned me to think very little of Mr. Binmore.

'We had been near two years ſettled, when he came down to pay a viſit to our brother-in-law, Sir William Summers. He renewed his acquaintance at our houſe, made a thouſand excuſes for not writing to me, which I was ſimple enough to accept, and again permitted myſelf to be prejudiced in his favour. He ſaid his father was a very mercenary, ambitious man; that he dared not marry a woman without a fortune, leſt he ſhould be diſinherited; but often perſuaded me to leave the country, go to London, where he would privately make me his wife, and live entirely unſuſpected by his father, who was, from infirmities, haſtening faſt to the grave. A thouſand ſpecious arguments he uſed to deceive me, and ſucceeded but too well. We uſed to meet almoſt every evening in an alcove at the bottom of the ſhrubbery. The conſequence of theſe nocturnal viſits was fatal to me.

'O, let no modeſt young woman ever conſent to meet the man privately, that dares preſume to urge a clandeſtine marriage: let her for one moment reflect, ſhe will ſee only ſelf-gratification in a propoſal of that nature, which muſt degrade her in her own eyes, incur ſuſpicions ſhocking to delicacy, and give the man himſelf a very indifferent opinion of her diſcretion and prudence. Had I not fooliſhly liſtened, and as weakly conſented to accompany him to London, he would

never have dared to hope I ſhould forget the duty I owed myſelf. One improper conceſſion leads to another; and it is very difficult to draw back and recover a falſe ſtep. I found it ſo; and though continually diſpleaſed at his freedoms, I had not reſolution to withdraw myſelf from him, and fell a victim to his baſeneſs and my own folly.

'It is needleſs to deſcribe my miſery, when reflection ſhewed me what a wretch I was. To remain at my brother's houſe was impoſſible; yet what was to become of me, if I ventured to quit it, and go to London? In ſhort, ladies, not to tire you, that evening in which we were overheard by my brother, he was more than uſually earneſt with me to accompany him, ſwore he could not live without me, and aſſured me he would marry me at the death of his father; promiſed me a companion of my own ſex, and every delight London could afford. I was weak enough at laſt to conſent; and the following day but one was fixed on for our removal.

'I returned to the houſe, under the oppreſſion of every feeling which a ſenſe of my own miſconduct, the tears and diſtreſs of my friends could raiſe in a mind not totally abandoned to vice. A note I received from him next day by my brother's ſervant, who was in his confidence, informed me he ſhould not ſee me that evening, but requeſted I would meet him at an early hour in the morning, to ſettle our intended journey, which was to take place towards the cloſe of that day.

'In the evening of this day previous to the meeting, I was walking in the garden, contemplating my unhappy ſituation, when my brother's footman ran through the garden; ſeeing me, "O, Miſs

" O, Miſs Neville," cried he, " I fear Mr. Binmore is killed by my maſter; and God knows what miſchief may happen in my miſtreſs's room: pray run thither."

' Without time for thought, almoſt diſtracted, I flew to my ſiſter's apartment. The firſt object I ſaw was Sir William Summers to all appearance dead, my ſiſter fainting, my brother the image of deſpair. Unable to ſupport the ſcene, I run back, not knowing where to go, when I again met Samuel the ſervant,

" Where, where is Mr. Binmore?"

" Dead, dead, madam, in the ſhrubbery, but ſome folks ſhall repent it."

I flew to the ſhrubbery, there lay the unhappy Binmore, a victim to his baſeneſs; for a moment I was ſenſeleſs, but recovering, I conceived the idea of flying from the houſe entirely; I walked as faſt as poſſible; I had a bonnet on and a looſe ſhawl, which I wore in the gardens. Guilt, terror and affliction lent me wings; I determined to go to our native pariſh, though ſeventeen miles off, and apply to an old ſervant, who had been nurſe maid to me and my ſiſters, and was married to a farmer there. I walked on without being fatigued, and 'tis aſtoniſhing that I kept the direct road, under the agitations which oppreſt me. It was a remarkable fine ſtar-light night; about ſix miles from home I was overtaken by a cart which carried goods, and was going through the village I deſigned to reſt at towards London; I gladly accepted the offer of the driver for a lift, as he called it; was ſet down at the head of the village where there was a croſs road, and told the man I was going the croſs way to another village; after ſome little time I followed the cart at a diſtance,

tance, and arrived at the houſe I wanted, about ſix o'clock in the morning. The miſtreſs of it, Mrs. Richards, was up; never was greater ſurpriſe than ſhe expreſſed, at ſeeing me. As I knew I could depend upon the integrity of this good creature, I very ſoon had reſolution enough to acquaint her with the dreadful occurrences at my brother's houſe. The poor woman was extremely ſhocked, but ſeeing the neceſſity of concealing me, ſhe carried me to a very decent chamber.

" Stay here, my dear madam, make yourſelf eaſy, I ſhall call you a relation of mine, as for the reſt, I will take care."

' Overcome with fatigue and diſtreſs of mind, I gladly retired to bed, but in leſs than three hours I was taken extremely ill, and in a very ſhort time an event took place, which though it gave eaſe to my mind, endangered my life, for it was near a fortnight before I could be moved from my bed, or make uſe of proper nouriſhment. My finances were but ſmall, I had four guineas and a half in my purſe, a ten pound note in my pocket book, a handſome gold watch, and a diamond ring which my ſiſter Neville had preſented me with. I had no clothes but thoſe I had on, and ſolicitous that no one of my family ſhould know what was become of me, I did not dare to ſend for more. Mrs. Richards was as tender of me as if I had been her own child; ſhe made enquiries about my brother, and heard that he had fled, being accuſed by his own ſervant, of two murders; that my ſiſter and her children were at Mr. Wellford's, and Lady Summers a violent proſecutor. After much deliberation I told Mrs. Richards I was reſolved to go to ſervice; that as a nurſery

or

or lady's maid I thought I might ſucceed, but it muſt be a great diſtance from that neighbourhood. She undertook to enquire out a ſituation for me, whilſt I was ſlowly recovering. When I reflected on my follies, my vices which had ruined myſelf and family; when I thought of my brother, his Lucy and children, I ſuffered pangs unutterable, and could have welcomed death as a bleſſing. One day my kind hoſteſs came and told me, ſhe had heard of a lady who wanted a decent young perſon to attend on a child three years old, and to go with her to Wales. I gladly accepted of the intelligence, waited on the lady, and was hired. With her I have conſtantly reſided 'till lately; the little girl was ſent to a boarding ſchool ſix months ago, and I remained with my miſtreſs, who treated me with the utmoſt kindneſs, until unhappily her huſband, who was rather a gay man, and frequently viſited town, was drawn in by a friend, to be bound for a large ſum, and then abſconded. This event ruined the family I lived with: my maſter was arreſted and confined, his creditors all fell in upon him, and I fear his deliverance is far off. My miſtreſs was unable to keep me, and determined to go to her huſband; ſhe gave me a character and recommendation to a lady in Swanſea. The parting with this dear lady, and the agitation of my mind in being thrown again upon the world, affected me deeply, and brought on a fever which held me for near three weeks. Soon as I recovered, I prepared to go to Swanſea; I walked, to ſave money, and being very weak, juſt as I came to Mrs. Menville's door, a faintneſs ſeized me, which rendered me incapable of going farther.'

"This dear lady's goodneſs," added ſhe, pointing

ing to Mrs. Menville, and addreſſing me: my friend interrupted her.

" It was the hand of Providence, my dear Miſs Neville, that conducted you here; I am only an humble inſtrument, I hope to procure you peace and comfort."

' The unfortunate girl made a thouſand acknowledgments, and we acquainted her with every particular relative to her brother and family. She begs, and entreats you will ſay every thing you can to her brother and ſiſter; if they forgive her, ſhe ſhall be eaſy; if they remain abroad, ſhe wiſhes to be with them. She ſays, ſhe has heard her ſiſter Wellford has been dead theſe three years, but ſhe never made any application to them, not being able to ſupport the idea of appearing to them in the deſpicable light her follies obliged her to aſſume, and which ſhe was conſcious ſhe too juſtly merited.'

' You will now, my good friend, acquaint Mr. Neville with what you think proper of this ſtory; doubtleſs it will be a ſatisfaction to him to know ſhe is alive, and in good hands. Mrs. Menville treats her like a ſiſter, and feels double pleaſure in ſo doing, now ſhe knows her to be the unfortunate Frances. Mr. Colemore and all friends here join me in ſincereſt good wiſhes to Mr. and Mrs. Neville, the good Clayton and yourſelf,

I am ever,

Your obliged friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HERE I am, my dear Lady Wentworth, at one of the ſweeteſt ſpots in the country, and with the friend of my heart, whoſe merit riſes upon me every day; I am ſure adverſity is *her* ſhining time, for her patience, her ſweetneſs of temper, her attentive kindneſs to her gueſts, her duties as a mother, altogether claim admiration and reſpect from thoſe who are happy enough to know her. She has only one ſervant, and that a girl, yet every thing is done with ſuch order and regularity, as if there were half a dozen to aſſiſt. She riſes very early, and the buſineſs for the day is ſettled before we aſſemble to breakfaſt. The houſe is like a fairy palace, very ſmall, but elegant, and encircled with roſes and woodbines. The firſt day of my arrival, its charming miſtreſs ſaid,

"Now my dear Mrs Colemore, look on your viſit to me as a rural excurſion, where you may expect good cream, butter and fruits, but no delicacies,

licacies, no luxuries, beyond that and a barn-door fowl. I will not pay my friends ſo poor a compliment, to believe they wiſh me to ſtep out of my family way," and, added ſhe, ſmiling, "you know it behoves me to be a little economical; nevertheleſs, the warm welcome of friendſhip ſhall attone for the deficiencies of my table, and your indifferent accommodations."

I told her moſt truly, "that to ſee her well and happy, was every luxury I expected, and her company in a cottage, ſuperior to every other accommodation that could be offered me."

She wears only black ſilk; I remonſtrated a little with her on keeping on that ſable habit ſo long.

"Have I not loſt a father and a huſband?" replied ſhe; "have I not cauſe to mourn, and can a ſorrowing heart find pleaſure in dreſs? no, I have done with ſhew and finery; neatneſs now is the height of my ambition, and 'tis fit that appearances ſhould correſpond with my feelings."

"Ah! my dear friend," cried I, "then your cheerfulneſs proceeds not from the heart."

"Indeed it does," ſaid ſhe, "I may grieve ſometimes, and ſigh for paſt happineſs, yet I can be cheerful, becauſe my heart tells me I have not deſerved to be deſerted, and becauſe I know the infatuation cannot laſt for ever. You will yet ſee me a happy woman; I am ſure you will; my hopes overbalance my fears, and therefore I ought to be in ſpirits."

I wrote Captain Harley ſome days ſince, and ſuppoſe he has communicated the contents to you; poor Miſs Neville is miſerable, from her preſent ſuſpenſe reſpecting her brother's health; I do not (indeed it would be cruel to) flatter her with

with hopes of his recovery. I point out Mrs. Menville as an example of patience and fortitude, and bade her learn the painful leſſon of being reſigned to inevitable evils. Poor girl! with a look of inexpreſſible ſorrow, ſhe ſaid,

"Oh, madam, am *I* a novice in the ſchool of adverſity; have I not ſuffered under the moſt bitter *ſelf*-reproach, under the conviction of being the cauſe of all the miſeries my family now endure? what but patience and reſignation, can have ſupported me through ſo many horrors as are attendant on conſcious guilt, and unavailing repentance!"

She wept bitterly; I beſought her pardon, and tried to ſooth her into more compoſure.

Yeſterday evening, as we were rambling over the hills, I was ſtruck with the appearance of a man ſtanding on the declivity, who juſt turned his head as we paſſed; I never ſaw a countenance ſo ſevere and ſtern; he looked, from the tranſient view I had of his face, to be at leaſt ſixty, and to have the appearance of ſome faſhion about him; his look, however, ſhocked me; I begged Mrs. Menville to quicken her ſteps to the houſe, and was obliged to tell her I was alarmed by that man; we were alone, and the place was ſolitary; ſhe caught my fears, and we proceeded with all the haſte we could, when ſuddenly Lord Longfield met us; I heartily rejoiced—not ſo my friend, ſhe wiſhed to have avoided him, but that could not be; he approached, and paid his compliments to us, congratulated Mrs. Menville on having a companion in her ſolitude; obſerving I kept looking back, he ſaid,

"You ſeem diſordered, ladies, I think, Mrs. Colemore has a look of apprehenſion."

"You

"You are right, my Lord, we have juſt paſſed a man, whoſe terrific appearance has extremely hurried me."

"I know the gentleman you mean," ſaid his Lordſhip, "nor am I ſurpriſed at your fright, for I really never ſaw a countenance of ſo much ſeverity in my life."

"Pray who is he?" I aſked.

"That I cannot tell," replied his Lordſhip, "but I daily ſee him on the hill, his eyes fixed on the ſea; once I ſaw him claſp his hands together, as if in grief, and haſtened towards him, with a view of offering ſome aſſiſtance; but as I drew near, he turned his head, ſurveyed me with a look of fury and diſtraction, and then rather run, than walked over the hill, and down the oppoſite declivity, where I loſt ſight of him. Since that time I have never ventured to approach him, only move my hat, which he returns; and I have thought for ſome days paſt he views me more attentively, and with leſs ferocity."

"I would give a good deal to know all about him," ſaid I.

"I am equally curious," returned his Lordſhip; he then enquired after Mr. Colemore, and requeſted he might have the pleaſure of ſeeing him at Longfield Vale, about four miles off. I promiſed to deliver his polite invitation, and when we came within ſight of our houſe, he took leave of us, to the great relief of Mrs. Menville, who had a thouſand apprehenſions he would accompany us home. Mr. Colemore will wait on his Lordſhip to-morrow.

Now pray, dear Lady Wentworth, write ſoon, every thing, and about every body that can intereſt us; I have this day promiſed my friend to

ſtay

ſtay one month beyond the time I intended; I cannot ſay ſhe had much difficulty to perſuade me to a thing ſo agreeable to myſelf. She deſires her beſt wiſhes for your happineſs, and will write very ſoon. Preſent my reſpects to Sir Charles, and believe me ever, my dear madam,

Your ſincere friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

Pray preſent my compliments to Captain Harley, and the good Nevilles.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear obliging Mrs. Colemore, has occaſioned me much pain, and ſome pleaſure. Poor Mr. Neville was alive when it arrived; *was*, I ſay, for alas! he is now no more; his ſufferings are over, and I hope he is enjoying a bleſſed immortality! I thought it beſt to communicate your intelligence reſpecting Miſs Neville, to her ſiſter; it very greatly affected her, and ſhe was doubtful whether her huſband had ſtrength to ſupport tidings he ſo little expected; he was then confined to his bed. We went in together, he ſaw our emotion,

"My deareſt Lucy," cried he, "ſpare me the torture of ſeeing you unhappy; you have a friend, a protector, to God and him I leave my wife and children."

Mrs. Neville could not ſpeak; I ſoothed and made him eaſy, and when he was a little compoſed, I aſked,

"Could

"Could he ſupport an agreeable ſurpriſe, to know the fate of one, for whom he had ſuffered much anxiety?"

"Good God!" ſaid he, "is it of my ſiſter, of poor Frances?"

"It is," I replied, "ſhe is alive, and with one of the moſt amiable of women, Mrs. Menville."

He claſped his hands, "My friend! my guardian angel," exclaimed he, "you are ever the meſſenger of conſolation—my God I thank thee," ſaid he, looking up, "my ſiſter has been preſerved from the dreadful crime I feared, ſhe has not given herſelf up to deſtruction, and is protected, like her fortunate brother, by goodneſs and benevolence—let me hear all, ſir, you have given me new life."

I read her ſtory to him, he was deeply affected, and again returned thanks to Providence, for conducting her to Mrs. Menville's, "the only houſe, perhaps," ſaid he, "where ſickneſs and poverty could have found an aſylum."

He entreated me to write directly, that he might, if he could hold a pen, ſend one line to comfort her; that line you find encloſed, he wrote directly, and that night was more eaſy and compoſed than many preceding ones, but yeſterday morning he was very viſibly altered, and when the phyſician came in, he confirmed my apprehenſions, that he was dying. Not to dwell on the melancholy theme, I ſhall only ſay, he expired about ten at night. This morning Lady Wentworth came to take Mrs. Neville to her houſe, but ſhe is incapable at preſent of being removed, and her ladyſhip kindly ſtays with her; a ſcene of the ſame melancholy kind may be expected at her own houſe, for I think Mr. Moleſworth

worth will not live long, unleſs a very great change takes place in his ſtate of health. And now, my dear Mrs. Colemore, you will, after Miſs Neville has got the line her brother wrote, prepare her for the ſtroke ſhe will naturally expect, though doubtleſs the ſhock will be ſevere; tell her he died bleſſing her, with his wife and children, and with the brighteſt hopes of everlaſting happineſs. Poor man! his ſufferings have been great, and his fate, among a million of inſtances, proves the immortality of the ſoul, and that the perſecuted on earth, if good and virtuous, will obtain a reward hereafter. It would be arraigning the goodneſs of God to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, for he had no crimes of his own to ſuffer for, it was the vices and injuſtice of others, that brought upon him ſhame and reproach, drove him from his country, and harraſſed him, 'till he could bear no more. All is now over, and he is happy!

Oh! my good friend, what has Mrs. Menville borne from her cruel huſband! *ſhe*, reduced to live in a cottage, on a hundred a year, and will not accept even of a reſidence from the friends of her heart; ſhe who acts from ſuch rigid rules of decorum and reſpect to a man, inſenſible of her merit. Oh! my friend, what can be done for ſuch a woman, who ſubmits to every inconvenience, every degradation, rather than receive the ſlighteſt favour, or leſſen her conſequence with herſelf? I admire, I adore, yet am diſpleaſed with her. Why ſhould ſhe, from motives of delicacy and deference to a worthleſs wretch, ſacrifice her peace of mind, and every indulgence ſhe has been accuſtomed to, and now more than ever wants? I cannot live at this diſtance,

tance, I muſt come to England ſoon, when I can ſettle every thing for Mrs. Neville and her children; perhaps it may be two months yet, before I can quit this place; do not let me languiſh for intelligence, for heaven-ſake write me conſtantly every thing about this angelic woman. I will not ſeek Menville, depend upon it I will not; and ſhould chance throw him in my way, I will avoid him like a venemous ſerpent.

This inſtant Clayton came to me, with letters he had received from England, relative to his enquiry after the Neville family. Mrs. Wellford is dead, and Mr. Wellford has quitted that part of the country where he formerly lived, and 'tis ſaid is gone to America, to an uncle he had there. Lady Summers, who married Mr. Neville's curate, and gave him poſſeſſion of the living, had buried her huſband, and is in a bad ſtate of health. A gentleman who rented Sir Thomas Summers's houſe, left between the two ſiſters, had refuſed to pay more than a moiety of the rent, 'till the death of Mr. Neville could be proved, and there are now in his hands, near ſeven hundred pounds for her, which he will pay when properly called upon. I am very happy to hear this, as I know it will greatly pleaſe Mrs. Neville; and it was very extraordinary Mr. Wellford never made any demands of it for his brother-in-law, and ſtill more ſurpriſing he ſhould drop all correſpondence with a man he profeſſed ſo great a friendſhip for. However, the family may now return to England and receive their own rentals.

Lady Wentworth has juſt looked in upon me; ſhe requeſts her beſt love to Mrs. Menville and yourſelf. Mrs. Neville, ſhe ſaid, deſired her grateful acknowledgments for the protection of her

her ſiſter, to whom ſhe will write the firſt moment ſhe can hold a pen, and hopes they ſhall ſoon meet to part no more. Write, pray, dear Mrs. Colemore, as ſoon as poſſible; would to heaven you could prevail on Mrs. Menville to accompany you back to Sudbury, I cannot bear the idea of her living alone in a cottage, ſo far from her friends; heavens bleſs her, and you alſo, for your generous friendſhip.

I am, dear madam,

ever ſincerely your's,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

"TELL me, dear Lady Wentworth, if I have been ungrateful for the bleſſings I enjoyed; if I have murmured or repined at the adverſe fate which has befallen me; if I have not ſtrove to conduct myſelf with propriety, and avoid the ſtings of envy and malice? my own judgment may deceive me, partial as we are to ourſelves, I may have committed errors without being ſenſible of them; my heart acquits me, but the world condemns me. Alas! I am now humbled indeed. I have this morning received a letter from Mr. Menville: theſe are the contents."

MR. MENVILLE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

You did well, madam, when you choſe retirement, to ſeclude yourſelf in Wales, unknown to every one but Lord Longfield; the choice was excellent, no doubt, and perfectly conſiſtent

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with the character of a lady, who through the kindneſs of a convenient friend, could carry on a correſpondence with her quondam lover after ſhe became a wife. How have I been deceived by a ſhameleſs woman, whoſe delicacy and virtue would not permit her to ſit at table with one of *ſuſpected* reputation! but, madam, the veil is withdrawn, my eyes are opened, and I chuſe you ſhould know they are ſo. Your conduct is no more my concern, and I am no longer at a loſs to know your adviſers, in preſuming to reſiſt my will, but let thoſe impertinent people have a care, though you are beneath my notice, they are not, and may repent their officiouſneſs.

W. MENVILLE.

Tell me, dear Lady Wentworth, how to ſupport this heavieſt of all evils, a murdered reputation; who is it I have offended ſo much as to make them my enemy, to be a ſpy upon my actions, and repreſent me in ſuch a horrid light to my huſband? Captain Harley's correſpondence with Mrs. Colemore is known, and I am ſuppoſed to be intereſted in it; heaven knows I never ſaw a ſingle letter, nor did ſhe ever mention to me but once, her correſpondence with him.

"What can I do? how is it poſſible to undeceive a man, ſo prejudiced againſt me. All but this I could have borne with patience; poverty and ill-treatment I was reſigned to, but reproach, ſhame and calumny ſubdues me quite. Mr. Colemore has offered to write, but I will not, on any account, draw him into an interference which might turn out diſagreeably, and make me more miſerable.

miſerable. I ſhall anſwer his letter nevertheleſs; 'tis my duty, far as I can, to clear myſelf from unjuſt ſuſpicions; I do not expect credit indeed, but I ought not to be ſilent under reproaches and inſults I do not deſerve. Oh! my dear friend, like an evil genius, Mrs. Thurkill directs his mind to my deſtruction; ſurely ſhe might content herſelf with depriving me of his love and protection; ſhe need not invent falſehoods, to make me infamous in his eyes. What a forlorn wretch I am, without father, huſband, brother or uncle to ſupport me! where can I direct my ſteps? my beſt friends are branded with ſuſpicions, I muſt lay down my pen, my ſpirits will no longer ſupport me.

LETTER XVI.

MRS. COLEMORE IN CONTINUATION.

OUR dear Mrs. Menville is indeed ſubdued; reproach, and ſuſpicion of crimes impoſſible for her to commit, has ſtruck her to the heart; ſhe has had two fainting fits; I have prevailed on her to go to bed; the dear innocent ſufferer looks the image of deſpair. How unfortunate that Lord Longfield ſhould be ſo near, to give even a colour of ſuſpicion for ſome malignant mind to work upon. A thought has juſt ſtruck me, has Sir Charles, has Mr. Moleſworth any particular friend of conſequence in Paris, to whom you could entruſt all her letters to you ſince her marriage, methinks, could he be brought to read them, they would ſtrike conviction to his mind, more than any thing we could aſſert. If you are of the ſame opinion, haſten thoſe unequivocal proofs of her innocence—but for heaven's ſake, let not Harley know of this buſineſs. I muſt and will prevail on her to return with us, ſhe ſhall not remain

remain here, a prey to grief and deſpair. I enclose a copy of her letter to Menville. Adieu, dear Lady Wentworth, I hardly know what I write, but depend upon my care of our injured friend.

Your's moſt truly,

E. M. GOLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MR. MENVILLE.

YOUR letter, ſir, I have peruſed with that ſurpriſe and affliction which a much injured wife muſt feel, at being wounded with an accuſation of crimes, a ſtranger to her ſoul. For you to inflict, and for me to ſuffer, ſeems the hard leſſon you have laid upon me; but could you not be contented with torturing my heart, muſt my fame be murdered, muſt my character be ſacrificed, to bring me more on a level with my cruel enemy? Ah! Mr. Menville, you muſt know I am unjuſtly accuſed, your reaſon acquits me, I know it does. In juſtice to myſelf, ſir, I muſt declare, upon my faith and honour, I never have *ſeen*, nor even have heard *read* to me, one line of Captain Harley's writing, ſince I became your wife, nor did I know Mrs. Colemore and he correſponded, 'till ſhe was about to become a wife, and then his name was mentioned but once to me. It was a decorum I laid upon myſelf to obſerve, not to have the ſmalleſt knowledge of a perſon, who had once been on the eve of a near connexion with me, and I have ſtrictly fulfilled every duty

in

in that point, which delicacy to you and myſelf could enjoin.

As to your charge reſpecting Lord Longfield, your own attorney, Mr. Watſon, can witneſs for me, that reſiding in Wales was entirely a propoſal of his, to occupy a houſe of his own, juſt then vacated; and ſo little was my knowledge of his Lordſhip, that I had been ſome time ſettled in this place, before I knew he had a houſe in the neighbourhood; he never has viſited me; I met him once, for I ſcorn to tell an untruth, nor does any action of my life require concealment or palliation; I met him by accident; his ſurpriſe was equal to mine; I told him I neither received nor paid viſits, he had delicacy enough to allow the propriety of my reſolution, and never intruded on it after. Thus much, ſir, I write, in juſtice to myſelf, I muſt ſay, it is not in reſpect or deference to you, who could load me with accuſations, you muſt be ſenſible I do not deſerve, and who can abandon an innocent wife and child to the cenſures of the world. One day you will make me reparation, and whenever that day arrives, you will find neither unkindneſs nor reproach has leſſened the ſenſe I entertain of *my* duties, and the father of my child, when he deigns to conſider her as *his*, will be received with open arms by an affectionate wife.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

TWO days ſince, my dear lady, I diſpatched a letter to you, which I dare ſay has given you much uneaſineſs, I therefore write immediately, that you may have the ſatisfaction to know our valued friend is much better, and I hope will ſoon be ſuperior to any grief; for calumnies, all who know her, know it is not in the chapter of poſſibilities ſhe could ever deſervedly incur. Mr. Colemore dined yeſterday with Lord Longfield, he has been frequently there lately, and is very much attached to him. My Lord greatly laments the unhappy ſituation of Mrs. Menville, and execrates the huſband, and his infamous companion. You may remember, in a former letter of mine, I mentioned a man whoſe appearance had frighted us in our walk on the hill; Lord Longfield has obtained his confidence; poor man! his ſtory is very

very melancholy, and I have permiſſion to acquaint you with it.

Mr. Chapman was a younger ſon of a baronet, was deſigned for the mercantile line, and ſent to Holland, where he reſided ſome years. On his return, his father advanced a handſome ſum, and placed him in partnerſhip with a very reſpectable merchant. For near four years every thing ſucceeded to their wiſhes; many overtures had been made to young Chapman to marry, but his heart being untouched, he declined entering into any engagements, from motives of intereſt only. The failure of a very capital houſe in Jamaica, proved of very ſerious conſequences to Chapman's credit; they found it abſolutely neceſſary one of the partners ſhould go over to the Weſt-Indies, and inveſtigate their affairs; the elder aſſociate was married, conſequently the younger one voluntarily offered to go, and very ſoon embarked on his voyage; it proved a favourable one, and without any accident he arrived at Jamaica. To his great vexation he found every thing much worſe than he expected; the houſe had failed for ſuch an immenſe ſum, as drew in others to a ſimilar ſituation; and in ſhort, he found there were no hopes of recovering any thing, the credit of their own houſe was involved in the general wreck. Whilſt he remained on the iſland; he frequently viſited at a Mr. Paterſon's, a man of very conſiderable property, and an only daughter, who was ſought for in marriage by many of the moſt opulent people in the iſland. She was handſome, ſenſible and good. Mr. Chapman very ſoon conceived a warm paſſion for this young lady, and as lovers eyes are pretty quick, he could diſcern

a very diſtinguiſhing partiality in her treatment of him. Mr. Paterſon was a man of ſenſe, probity and good nature. He pitied Mr. Chapman's ſituation and diſappointments, he did more, with a liberal mind, he offered to take him into partnerſhip, though from the wreck of his fortune at home, he had very little to expect in the pecuniary way. An offer like this was not to be rejected. He remained on the iſland, having written to his former friend, who had been compelled to retire from buſineſs, and live in the country with his wife's family, who were perſons of fortune. He wrote alſo to his father and elder brother. He now managed the buſineſs for Mr. Paterſon extremely to his ſatisfaction; he ſaw the growing partiality between the young couple, nor did he diſapprove of it. "Sophia is very young," ſaid he one day to her lover, "I obſerve how matters are between you, but I depend upon your honour, and her prudence and obedience to me, that no particular explanation or engagement takes place between you, until you have reſided with me two years—at the expiration of that time, if you love each other, I will give you my daughter, and the whole of my buſineſs." An offer ſo truly generous, impreſſed Chapman with the deepeſt gratitude; it ſtimulated him to deſerve it; and in ſhort, at the expiration of the two years, he was bleſt with the hand and heart of the lovely Sophia. For ſix years they enjoyed uninterrupted happineſs; ſhe had two children, a boy and a girl. Nearly ſix years after their marriage the good Mr. Paterſon died, a loſs ſeverely felt by his children, who truly loved him. Soon after he received a letter from his father, mentioning

tioning the death of his brother, his own ill ſtate of health, and entreating him to haſten over to England, that he might ſee him once more before his eyes were cloſed for ever. This letter gave the affectionate pair much concern; the requeſt of a dying father muſt be complied with; Mrs. Chapman was very far advanced in her pregnancy, and unfit to riſk the fatigues of the voyage; ſhe inſiſted on going with him, he determined to wait 'till her delivery, rather than take her in that ſituation. At length, by the interpoſition of a family they were exceedingly intimate with, it was ſettled that Mr. Chapman ſhould go in the firſt ſhip, and Mrs. Chapman, with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Baris, and their family, follow him as ſoon as ſhe could do it with ſafety. This being the plan fixed on, Chapman made up his affairs, and taking a moiety of his property with him, the remainder to be brought over by his beloved wife, he took his departure from Jamaica, and arrived ſafe in England, time enough to cloſe his father's eyes, who expired within a fortnight after his arrival. He was now Sir Edward Chapman, with a good eſtate in Leiceſterſhire. He amuſed himſelf in embelliſhing his houſe and gardens againſt the arrival of his dear Sophia; from whom he had received one letter, and he was extremely anxious to hear of her ſafe delivery. At length news came from Mr. Baris, Mrs. Chapman was brought to bed of a fine boy, perfectly ſafe and well; and as ſoon as her health was re-eſtabliſhed, they ſhould embark for England. He ſoon after had another letter from his wife, ſhe was quite well, and they deſigned to embark the following week. He now daily expected them, a fortnight,

a month

a month elapſed, and no accounts, he began to grow very uneaſy. One morning taking up the daily paper at breakfaſt, it was mentioned, that a large ſhip from Jamaica, in making for Falmouth in a dark night, had ſtruck upon the rocks at Scilly, and foundered, every perſon on board periſhed, but two men and one boy who ſwam on ſhore. It was added, there were many paſſengers on board. This paragraph froze his ſenſes; it was ſome hours before he returned to reaſon. He then ordered a carriage, and drove with all ſpeed to Cornwall; he travelled night and day until his arrival at Falmouth, he there made every poſſible enquiry relative to the ſhip; one of the men was ſtill at Falmouth, being much bruiſed by the rocks; from him he learnt the fatal ſtory, that his wife and three children, with Mr. and Mrs. Baris, and all their property was loſt for ever! although he expected, he was not prepared to ſuſtain the fatal news; he was taken ill of a frenzy fever; his younger brother, a clergyman, was ſent for expreſs; after every method for his recovery was tried in vain, his brother conveyed him to the neighbourhood of London, where he remained for nine years, and very unexpectedly recovered his reaſon by an accident of falling from a chair againſt the ſide of the door, which cut his head, and he bled to that violent degree, his death was hourly expected; but though reduced extremely low, he recovered not only his health, but his ſenſes, and a perfect recollection of what had befallen him. Being freed from his confinement, he made over his whole fortune to his brother, except two hundred a year, he then came into Wales, took a ſmall cottage in the valley, with one elderly woman to attend him, and for years has frequented the ſide of the hill where he

he ſees the ſea, and has often been over-heard addreſſing that cruel element in the moſt melancholy terms. He ſhunned all ſociety, and from the ſternneſs of his countenance, no one ventured to addreſs him. He ſaid there was ſomething touching and melancholy in Lord Longfield's appearance, which attracted his notice, a ſympathy which ſtole upon his heart, and induced him at laſt to admit of his converſation. He now viſits his Lordſhip frequently, conditioning no other viſitor is admitted when he is there. My Lord ſays he is a pleaſing intelligent man, but an habitual melancholy, a ſenſe of his misfortunes, which he ever deplores, renders him at times very unequal and deſultory in his converſation. "A wife, three children, my beſt friends, all, all loſt at once; great God, I revere thy judgments, yet I muſt think my deſtiny ſevere!" ſuch is his language frequently; my Lord tries to ſoothe and comfort him, and wiſhed him to go with him for the ſummer abroad, to give a diverſity to his thoughts. "No!" cried he, "here I will live, in this ſpot I will die, in view of that terrific element which has robbed me of every comfort upon earth. Fancy ſometimes brings my wife, my dear children to my view; I ſee their ſpirits dancing on the waters, and waiting for me, in a little time I ſhall join them, and be no more."

Lord Longfield ſaid, there was ſuch a ſolemnity in his manner, ſuch a wildneſs in his look, that he did not dare to urge him farther. He owned to his Lordſhip, the ſight of women, particularly young and handſome ones, were his averſion.

"Is not this a melancholy ſtory, my dear Lady Wentworth? there is nothing I think ſo diſtreſſing

diſtreſſing to one's feelings, as hearing of woes beyond one's power to redreſs—and what can be done for ſuch a man, where pecuniary relief is not wanted, and whoſe ſorrows you cannot remove?"

I have this moment received a letter from my father, with one encloſed to Mrs. Menville, from her uncle; it was ſent to Sudbury, as ſuppoſing our family knew her addreſs; ſhame on him, that he had not been the firſt to protect her from the inſults ſhe has received; I wonder much what he can write about now, after ſuch cruel neglect. I hope our friend Harry is arrived in India e'er now; I like that young man, he has a good heart and I am ſure will do well. My father writes that he has had a viſit from Mr. Martin, who is now gone to France for a month or two; I wiſh he may keep all his good reſolutions, but he is gone to the land of frivolity and diſſipation; old habits too often return, when encouraged by example and tempted by folly, to reſume them; if he returns without being infected, I ſhall think highly of his ſincerity and fortitude. I am ſent for to Mrs. Menville. Good heavens! I am out of all patience; was ever malice and wickedneſs carried to ſuch a height! this uncle has ſent the following letter, which I copy for your peruſal; but my dear injured friend will write you her ſentiments and afflicting determination, which nevertheleſs I hope to prevail on her to alter.

I am ever, dear madam,

Your ſincere and affectionate

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

MR. SEYMOUR TO MRS. MENVILLE.

Niece,

I Have received a letter from your huſband, acquainting me with the ſhameful manner in which you live, ever ſince you withdrew yourſelf from his houſe; alſo that you correſponded with that Harley after you became his wife: fye upon you, to be ſo wicked and ungrateful; no wonder (you behaved ſo ill,) your huſband ſhould ſeek comfort and pleaſure wherever he could find it; yet had you not left his houſe, and gone it ſeems in the neighbourhood of a Lord Longfield, who is now your gallant, he would never have expoſed you, but lived upon decent terms with you at leaſt. As for the affair of Mrs. Thurkill, you ought to have been blind to it, when he behaved well to you, but you brought it all upon yourſelf. However, neither your huſband nor myſelf chuſe you ſhould

ſhould go on to bring diſgrace upon us; I have the management of his buſineſs now, and ſo we propoſe, as you pretend to deny your guilt, to bring you to the proof. You and your child ſhall go to France, and board in a convent; if you conſent, I have leave to add fifty pounds per year to your income; if you refuſe, we ſhall know what to think of you, and ſhall caſt you off for ever. Mr. Menville having forgot to mention the name of the place you lived at, I ſend this to your old cronies the Ellis's, though it's a ſhame for them to wink at ſuch doings. Soon as you receive this, write me an anſwer directly; at preſent I am ſorry to call myſelf your uncle.

THOMAS SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

My dear Lady Wentworth, I have often heard exceſs of miſery rouſes the torpid mind, and cauſes exertions of fortitude which leſſer evils fail to do; at this moment I experience the truth of the obſervation. Under the vexations I have ſuffered, I ſtruggled for patience and compoſure, but the refractory heart often repelled my efforts, and the tears of the night exceeded the aſſumed cheerfulneſs of the day. The laſt letter I received from Mr. Menville, was a ſevere blow at the time, yet conſcious innocence ſupported me under it; this letter of my uncle's has entirely cured me of ſorrow or regret; that Mr. Menville ſhould accuſe me ſo falſely to my relation; that he, to whoſe interference I owe every miſery; that *he* ſhould believe the aſperſions on my character, and throw me off like a guilty creature, without

without deigning to enquire how far I deſerved ſuch treatment. Such inſults, my dear friend, have raiſed me above myſelf; I will ſubmit to their wiſhes, I will accept of the retirement pointed out to me, and let *them* feel, let the unworthy authors of this ſcheme be made ſenſible, that no outward circumſtances can depreſs a mind, guarded by rectitude, and ſupported by innocence. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore are much enraged, and adviſe me very ſtrongly againſt ſubmitting to ſuch arbitrary deſigns, but I have made up my mind; 'tis my fixed determination to obey my huſband in every point that is not inimical to what I owe my own honour; he has an undoubted right to place his wife and child where he pleaſes; I never will conteſt that right. Whilſt he left me at liberty to live where I choſe, I thought I ſhould conform moſt to his liking, and my own inclinations, by living retired in the country; unhappily I fixed on a wrong ſpot, which has given colour for the accuſations againſt me; I will now prove to them, no attachment to perſons or places, ſhall prevent me from doing my duty, and obeying the wiſhes of my huſband in every thing I can do. My friends may murmur, but their judgment muſt applaud me. Miſs Neville is earneſt to accompany me, but I have poſitively refuſed; her friends will doubtleſs ſoon return to England; ſhe may yet enjoy tranquillity in the boſom of her family; I will not be the means of depriving her of it. The gloom of a convent is little calculated to ſpeak peace to a mind that ſuffers from ſelf-reproach, as ſhe continually does. No, my good friend, I will have no companion but my

ſweet

ſweet child; no attendant but little Patty. I have written my uncle the following anſwer.

Sir,

Unconſcious of deſerving the ſuſpicions, I may ſay accuſations of Mr. Menville, or the ſeverity of your pen, I can wrap myſelf up in my own innocence and integrity, and deſpiſe the malice of my enemies. Had Mr. Menville, when he *drove* me from his houſe, by an alternative I could not with honour heſitate in my choice of; had he condeſcended to have pointed out a place of reſidence for me, when compelled to leave his caſtle, I ſhould certainly have conformed to his orders: but I was permitted to go where I pleaſed; yet even then I conſulted his attorney, and retired to a houſe he recommended. Now that Mr. Menville has choſen a place for his wife to live at, I have only to hold myſelf in readineſs to obey his commands. It is indifferent to me what part of the world I reſide in, when reprobated by my huſband, and caſt off by my relations. My own heart juſtifies me, and I am content. Whenever you or Mr. Menville ſignify your orders, as to time and place, for my removal, I will inſtantly comply with them.

I am, ſir,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

E. MENVILLE.

As my *uncle* was ſorry to conſider himſelf as *ſuch*, I had too much pride to recogniſe the relationſhip

tionſhip by my ſignature. I owe him nothing, therefore ſhall make no undue ſubmiſſions. I have prevailed on Miſs Neville to accompany my friends to Sudbury, but they will not leave me 'till my future deſtination is determined. Mrs. Colemore has juſt acquainted me with her advice to you, of ſending my letters to Mr. Menville; I hope nothing has been done in it, and I earneſtly entreat no ſuch ſtep may be taken. Time and patience will do every thing, I will not hazard my friends to the chance of receiving inſults, which might too probably be the caſe, while the tide of prejudice and diſlike is ſo ſtrong againſt me. I cannot convey to you the mixed ſenſations of my mind at preſent; grief, however, has no ſhare in it; 'tis pride, confidence and reſignation; 'tis contempt and diſdain of my unworthy accuſers: I feel myſelf elevated above my ſituation, and am determined my conduct ſhall ſpeak for itſelf. Let me conjure you to let nothing tranſpire concerning me to your friends. I am well, and not *unhappy*. That *your* felicity may daily increaſe, is the earneſt wiſh of,

Your affectionate and obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A Thouſand thanks to you my dear obliging correſpondent, for your quick return to my laſt letter. That your charming friend is well, and Mr. Colemore and yourſelf with her, I rejoice to hear; and to find that her fortitude is equal to the evils ſo heavily laid upon her, is the only conſolation I can poſſibly receive. Mrs. Neville is much recovered, for which ſhe is greatly indebted to the kindneſs of Lady Wentworth; Mr. Moleſworth is alſo conſiderably amended, beyond expectation, and 'tis ſettled, that in one month we ſhall all return together; yet how I ſhall bear to live in the ſame country with Mrs. Menville, knowing ſhe is injured and inſulted, knowing ſhe muſt be deprived of a thouſand little neceſſary indulgences her narrow income will not ſupply; oh! my friend, of how little value in my eyes is the fortune I now poſſeſs, when it cannot, or will not

not be permitted to ſerve her, who deſerves diadems! I muſt not think, I muſt not talk of her; Lady Wentworth has ſealed up her lips, ſhe will not permit me to aſk any queſtions; yeſterday ſhe received a letter, I was impatient and anxious———

"I aſſure you, my good friend Harley, Mrs. Menville is well, ſhe is not unhappy; aſk no more, it is her requeſt, which has the force of a command with me, that I make no communications concerning her to any body; ſhe muſt be obeyed, and whilſt you ſee *me* eaſy, be aſſured nothing can be particularly amiſs with *her*."

This was all I could obtain; do not you be ſo inflexible; for heaven's ſake continue to write during theſe next three weeks, for I have an uncommon depreſſion of ſpirits, which ſeeks for conſolation only from you.

As Mrs. Neville, on her return to England, will have nearly ſeven hundred pounds to receive, I would not wound her delicacy, by making any ſettlement on her, particularly as the moiety of her eſtate will bring in almoſt two hundred a year; I have therefore ſettled an hundred a year upon each of her children, for life, and the ſame ſum on Miſs Neville. Do not give me credit for any extraordinary generoſity on this occaſion, I promiſed Mr. Neville to provide for his offspring; and the little ſervices I have been ſo happy to render them, is the only value I have ſet upon the fortune the kind Colonel bequeathed to me. I am much ſurpriſed I have never had a line from Lord Trueby; the ſtate of his health was ſo indifferent, that I have many doubts of his exiſtence. Such women as Mrs. Thurkill and Mrs. B——, what miſchiefs do they not occaſion in families;

families; how wide-ſpreading is their errors, and how ſeverely do they fall on the innocent! do not, my exemplary friend, ſuppoſe I mean to exculpate man, and throw *all* the blame on women, no, I execrate the vile ſeducer, and know no puniſhment adequate to his crimes; but your lovely ſex, by the little attention you pay to the character of the man, by the encouragement the gay libertine receives; the approbation attendant on gallantry and faſhionable manners, and the ſeverity with which you judge your own ſex, certainly invite freedoms, and inſpire confidence. 'Tis you alone can repel them; charming woman only can make a reformation in our conduct, by reſpecting herſelf, and demanding reverence and admiration, inſtead of that frivolous and licentious attachment which aſſumes the name of love, without feeling one ſentiment of it.

If my mind was attuned to enjoy amuſement and pleaſure, I know no place more calculated for the purpoſe than Spa. Here are a number of foreigners of diſtinction; many noble families from England; the air is delightful, ſo clear and light, that it gives uncommon ſpirits to thoſe who come from our foggy iſland; muſic, dancing, cards and routs, are in every houſe; gaming is here tolerated, under the protection of the biſhop, and immenſe ſums are loſt daily. I have never yet entered into one of their parties; Clayton loſt about three hundred pounds one night, and is ſatisfied. The Wentworth family is the ſource of my pleaſures; I am particularly pleaſed with Sir Charles and Mr. Sackville; the former is a man of faſhion, free from its follies; he is the beſt huſband in the world to a woman of real merit. Happy couple! may no clouds intervene

to

to interrupt your felicity. Mr. Sackville is a worthy reſpectable man, but plain in his manners and addreſs, which however bear the ſtamp of reſpect and ſincerity, and muſt ever be pleaſing. Mrs. Neville and Clayton join in beſt reſpects to your amiable friends, the former has written to her ſiſter; may I preſume to add mine; will Mrs. Menville hear the name of Harley; yet why ſhould ſhe not; why ſhould a man who reſpects her for her intrinſic value, who is the ſincereſt of her friends, and would die to promote her happineſs, even with Menville; why ſhould not his reſpects be acceptable, when they do not militate againſt any one obſervance ſhe may have impoſed upon herſelf? yet do as you pleaſe, you know better than myſelf what ought to be done, and I ſubmit to your laws. Haſten, my dear correſpondent, haſten another letter to your

Faithful and obliged ſervant,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

MY dear Lady Wentworth, I have received an anſwer, a very ſhort one, from my uncle, with a fifty pound note encloſed, deſiring I would ſet off as ſoon as poſſible for Abbeville, where the Abbeſs or Superior would be ready prepared to receive me: I am to proceed to Dover, croſs to Boulogne, and from thence to Abbeville. This is Tueſday: on Monday next I ſhall accompany my friends to Sudbury, ſtay one night with Doctor Ellis, and follow my orders. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore go with me to Dover; Miſs Neville remains with Mrs. Ellis.

How my little Emily may bear the ſea, I know not; but the paſſage, I apprehend, is but a ſhort one. My uncle takes not the leaſt notice of the contents of my letter. Mercenary man! His inducements to marry me to Mr. Menville were

with a view to aggrandize his family; and now he ſacrifices my intereſts to the ſame motive; "he has the management of Mr. Menville's buſineſs." Powerful plea! Who would regard the character, the happineſs of a niece, when put in competition with profit to himſelf? Sordid intereſt governs half the world.

When arrived at my deſtined habitation, I ſhall write immediately; I ſhall have leiſure enough there for "meditation, even to madneſs;" but my ſpirits, my reſolution will not deſert me; and I truſt I ſhall meet friends even in a convent.

Mrs. Colemore wiſhes to add a few lines. I ſhall only ſay for the preſent, I am truly, and in all circumſtances, ever

Your affectionate,

And obliged friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Mr. Colemore ſpends half his time with Lord Longfield, who, I find, is ſoon going abroad. I hope he has not the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion he is an object of jealouſy to Mr. M.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

MRS. COLEMORE IN CONTINUATION.

I MUST write a few lines, indeed, for my heart is burſting with vexation. Yeſterday Mrs. Menville received a letter from her wretch of an uncle, and determined to obey the lordly mandate. Mr. Colemore being engaged to dine with Lord Longfield, mentioned our intended journey next week. He was ſurpriſed.—"Mrs. Menville going with you? Then you have prevailed at laſt."

"Would to heaven we had!" replied Mr. Colemore, unguardedly; "but ſhe is fixed in her reſolution to obey her huſband's commands, and is going immediately to a convent."

"A convent!" exclaimed Lord Longfield, ſtarting; "a convent! Good God! for what reaſon is Mrs. Menville to be confined in a convent?"

"Becauſe, my Lord, ſhe is in your neighbourhood."

His Lordſhip claſped his hands together in an agony. Mr. Colemore, ſenſible, that in his warmth he had ſaid too much, was ſtruck dumb.

"Mr. Colemore," ſaid my Lord, after a pauſe, "you have ſaid too much, not to raiſe my curioſity to hear more. I am but ſlightly informed of any particulars relative to Mrs. Menville. Her huſband's conduct is open to the world; but I think I could ſtake my honour and life, that ſhe has behaved with ſuch uncommon propriety, as will never juſtify ſuch violent ſteps as he is about to purſue. If my being in this neighbourhood has any ſhare in cauſing this diſtreſs to her, I will leave it in twenty-four hours.—Tell me, dear Mr. Colemore, tell me all."

And he was fooliſh enough to comply; related every thing that we knew, the letters and inſults, with her meekneſs and obedience. When the miſchief was done he ſaw his folly. His Lordſhip was like a madman: he curſed Menville, Thurkill, uncle, and all the family; ſwore ſhe was an angel, and ſhould never be in the power of ſuch brutes. "She go to France alone!" cried he; "no, never!"

Mr. Colemore was quiet till he ſaw him a little more compoſed: he then argued with him on the propriety of her determination, and the probability that her compliance, and the regularity of her conduct, would open Menville's eyes, and give a favourable turn to her affairs.

"A favourable turn!" repeated his Lordſhip; "what, when he is tired of the creature with him, he is to return, and honour her, by taking notice of the moſt lovely and virtuous of her ſex,

ſex, after being contaminated by the moſt profligate. A fine recompence, indeed, he can make her now, with a broken fortune, and an eſtranged heart."

In ſhort, Colemore was above three hours with him before he grew the leaſt compoſed; and he ſaw, what he never ſuſpected, that his Lordſhip was actually more than commonly intereſted for the happineſs of Mrs. Menville.

After a world of chat, it was at length ſettled, that Mr. Colemore and myſelf ſhould ſee her ſafe in the convent, for he conjured up a hundred ideas of ill-treatment, and being carried away from the knowledge of all her friends.

When my huſband returned, and told me what had paſſed, and how much he had been thrown off his guard, I could have cried for vexation, nor would I have my friend ſuppoſe his Lordſhip acquainted with a ſingle circumſtance for the world. I declare, after all, men are greater blabs than women; but Mr. Colemore is ſo provoked at her ill uſage, that it is ever uppermoſt, and he can neither think nor talk of any other ſubject. Adieu; you will hear from me ſoon.

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY beloved friend, never was ſurpriſe equal to mine on the peruſal of your laſt letter, and one which I received from Mrs. Colemore the following day. What wretches are Menville and your uncle! You confined in a convent under imputed guilt! Gracious Heaven! I have no patience. But they know not the mind they ſeek to ſubdue; how ſhould they? Strangers to every fine feeling of the ſoul; governed by no motives but paſſion and intereſt; conſcious of their own baſeneſs, they think it impoſſible to bear injuries without retaliation, and have no idea a woman can be truly good and virtuous from principle, and riſe ſuperior to ill treatment, from a conſcious ſenſe of innocence alone.

Oh! my dear Mrs. Menville, your lot is indeed ſevere; but your trials are only proportionate to your virtue and prudence, and you will ſhine the

the brighter for the baſe attempts to lower you on a level with themſelves.

That infamous creature, Thurkill, is doubtleſs the contriver of all, ſhe wants not underſtanding, ſhe muſt be ſenſible of your ſuperiority in every thing. She has injured, and therefore hates you. She wiſhes to provoke you to ſome act of deſperation, that may throw a veil over your virtues. Poor creature; ſhe knows little what a mind like your's can bear, and how impoſſible it is for virtue to aſſociate with vice! Support your ſpirits, my deareſt friend; exert your fortitude, nor let your enemies triumph in your ſorrow.

You may be aſſured I would not communicate your laſt letters to any but my own family; would to Heaven it were your's alſo. My uncle, aunt, and Mr. Sackville cry out, "Why will not Mrs. Menville accept of our protection? why not ſeek comfort from her friends? why not, indeed, but becauſe ſhe has peculiar notions of her own reſpecting her obedience to a worthleſs huſband.

I know you will congratulate me on my uncle's recovery. He is amazingly altered for the better; and our ſpirits are all revived of courſe. Mrs. Neville is a moſt pleaſing woman: an habitual melancholy, which her recent loſs has increaſed, prevents her from ſharing in converſations, which however, is eaſily ſeen by the little ſhe does ſay, ſhe is very well enabled to ſupport; but there is a ſoftneſs, a delicacy in her manners, that greatly intereſts every one in her favour. We propoſe leaving Spa in about three weeks, and ſhall come through Bruſſels; for I prohibit the Paris road, leſt any of the party ſhould fall in with Menville, and I would not anſwer for the conſequence of ſuch a meeting.

You

You may recollect a Mr. Manſel, whom I deſcribed to you as a male flirt. The ſex are revenged, my dear. He was very ill when he came to Spa, in conſequence of his diſappointment where he leaſt expected it: he got better, however, from the gaieties of the place; and not being quite cured, attached himſelf to a very pretty girl, who was here with an aunt, and appeared in a very genteel ſtyle. He met with his uſual ſucceſs; his inſinuating manners won the girl's heart. *He*, proud of his triumph, conducted her about to all public places; and by his particular preference and attachment, diſtanced every other man.

About a week ſince the gentleman began to relax, to talk of friendſhip, eſteem, and ſo forth, and lament that he ſhould ſoon be under the neceſſity of leaving Spa. The young lady drooped, the aunt was mortified, when, lo! unexpectedly arrived from Bruſſels the girl's brother, who is an officer in the Hanoverian troops. He was ſoon informed of the buſineſs, and waited on the gentleman, gave him to underſtand, neither his ſiſter's character nor peace of mind ſhould be trifled with, and he muſt marry her directly, or give him ſatisfaction. Dreadful alternative! But the hero who could triumph over women had not the ſmalleſt inclination to fight: he remembered Hudibras.

"O, what perils do environ
"The man who meddles with cold iron."

He was not fonder of a brace of bullets. He tried what excuſes and palliation would do; but the hot-headed brother was reſolute, and admitted of neither; conſequently he was compelled to determine,

determine, and of the two evils choſe the lady, rather than the brother's courteſies: ſo two days after they were married. The girl has not a ſhilling, and is thought very gay and expenſive. 'Tis very probable poor Manſel may be ſorry; no kind brother ever interfered before in his *friendly* attentions, where he might have had a greater chance of happineſs: but I dare ſay he uſually took care not to extend his *friendſhip* where there *was* a father or a brother. Sir Charles ſays he looks very creſt-fallen; ſo much the better: but, as he is now married, and can do no more miſchief, he has my good wiſhes for his happineſs.

I believe I never told you Mr. Sackville preſented me with ten thouſand pounds the day I married Sir Charles. The compliment was offered to him, but he declined the favour. *I* was *compelled* to accept it, although I wanted it not. Now, my beloved friend, do not, by an unjuſtifiable pride, reproach *me:* I accepted of favours I could not want, to oblige the donor; let *my* example have weight with *you.* The ſlender income you are allowed is inſufficient to procure you the reſpect and attention you are entitled to. In convents, my dear Mrs. Menville, there is more regard paid to appearances than in any other place whatever. 'Tis a miſtaken notion to believe no deſire for dreſs prevails: I do aſſure you the nuns are particularly fond of ſeeing perſons about them make an elegant appearance; they think it gives a conſequence to their convent, and are not ſo abſtracted, but the idea of rank and fortune has great influence on their minds, and procures both reſpect and indulgence. You muſt not, you ſhall not refuſe from me an addi-

tional hundred a-year; and, to reconcile your pride and delicacy, conſider it (that is, ſuppoſing your pride ſuperior to your friendſhip) as a loan, and when the happy day arrives, that you are reſtored to your rights, *I* will *condeſcend* to be reimburſed. If you refuſe me, I ſhall know what to think of your love for me, and how ſincere you are in your wiſhes for my happineſs. I put it now to the proof, and ſhall judge accordingly of both.

I wiſh to Heaven I could ſee you at Abbeville; but being in a party, and in ſuch a party as watch all my motions, and even looks, I dare not run the hazard. I told that Argus, Captain Harley, I would not be followed, nor my face ſcrutinized at ſuch an unmerciful rate. Why, if I put on a grave face, "O! he is ſure ſome ill news is arrived."—I cannot have a matrimonial ſquabble with Sir Charles, but he would directly conclude he muſt be concerned in it. Poor fellow! Don't be angry; I cannot but pity him.

Mrs. Neville ſeems inclined to live in the neighbourhood of Sudbury, if ſhe can meet with a houſe: ſhe promiſes herſelf Miſs Neville will reſide with her. The generous Harley has done very handſome for her children, and ſettled a hundred a-year on Miſs Neville. What a happineſs, if every man of fortune would devote ſome part of it to the relief of the unfortunate. A humane heart is certainly a very great bleſſing to the poſſeſſor, if accompanied with the power of doing good. What delightful feelings, to raiſe the deſpairing mind to hope and comfort, to ſtop the tear of affliction, and give peace to the wounded breaſt. O! my dear, I am convinced, the miſer, the narrow, contracted ſtoic, by hardening his

his heart, is ſufficiently puniſhed by the loſs of thoſe ſenſations, thoſe ſenſibilities, which are delicious to the generous and benevolent, even when they draw the tears of ſympathy.

I ſhall moſt anxiouſly expect to hear from you. Remember, it is in your power to make me happy; and that a proud ſpirit, reſiſting the entreaties of a friend, is incompatible with the virtues you poſſeſs, and endeavour to be diſtinguiſhed for.

Every one of our family, who are your warm admirers, join in love and good wiſhes.——You have my daily prayers for your happineſs.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

MRS. COLEMORE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

I KNOW not, my friend, whether my good-nature does not outſtep the bounds of diſcretion, in my wiſh to oblige you. Lady Wentworth certainly acts with more prudence; and I might perhaps with leſs difficulty refuſe you perſonal communications than I can reſtrain my pen. Yet, as I have had no reaſon to complain of you, I have no right to withdraw my confidence, and therefore, depending on *your* diſcretion, I ſhall write you a few lines only now till I am more at leiſure.

Next Monday we leave this ſweet cottage, but take our ſweeter friend with us, perhaps to return no more. Miſs Neville will reſide at my father's, until her ſiſter comes to England. Mrs. Menville has heard from her huſband and uncle: they are brutes, both. You know not, perhaps, that my correſpondence with you has been moſt

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maliciouſly and cruelly miſinterpreted. No matter; we are ſuperior to the malice of our enemies, which will one day recoil on themſelves.

There is a charming man in this neighbourhood, a Lord Longfield: Colemore viſits him often; but our prudent friend admits none but ourſelves. He talks of going to the Continent ſoon; and, had you not been on the eve of returning, we intended introducing two amiable men to each other.

As Mrs. Neville can have no particular ſituation in view when ſhe comes to England, we requeſt ſhe will come directly to us, and remain till ſhe can ſettle herſelf perfectly to her wiſhes.

I did venture to preſent your reſpects to Mrs. Menville. "She was obliged for your *polite* remembrance."—She is very well, as lovely as ever, and a thouſand times more reſpectable. O! that ſuch a woman ſhould be the wife of ſuch a man!

I ſhall probably write you one letter more before your return, and ſpeak a little more to the purpoſe than I do now; till then, may health and happineſs attend you.

I am, ſincerely,

Your obliged,

Humble ſervant,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HERE I am, dear Lady Wentworth, ſafely lodged in the convent: I ſhall go back, however, to my ſweet and much-regretted cottage. I had written Mr. Watſon, and told him the neceſſity of leaving his houſe. I ſent for the perſon who was accuſtomed to have the care of it, paid my rent, and a quarter extraordinary, which I thought Mr. Watſon was well entitled to, as I left it without proper notice.

The day of our departure came, and, blame me if you pleaſe, I could not help being overwhelmed with ſadneſs when I drove from the houſe. About a mile from it we ſaw Lord Longfield walking on the road. Mr. Colemore ſtopt the carriage; and he advanced to it: he bowed moſt reſpectfully.

"I am happy, ladies," ſaid he, "to have the good luck of wiſhing you a pleaſant journey. To you, Madam," added he, addreſſing me, "I have never

never had an opportunity of expreſſing my warmeſt wiſhes for your happineſs; but, ſure I am, no one living is more intereſted than myſelf in your ſucceſs in every wiſh of your heart."

"Your Lordſhip does me great honour," I replied, "and it muſt always contribute to my felicity, when worthy perſons intereſt themſelves in my behalf."

I ſaid no more: I dared not truſt my voice, for juſt then my ſpirits were very low. His Lordſhip took leave ſoon after, and we proceeded on our journey. Nothing particular occurred on the road, and we arrived ſafe at Sudbury. Doctor and Mrs. Ellis ſhed tears of joy, I hope, at ſeeing us. I was extremely fatigued, and withdrew early to bed, but ſleep was not my friend.

The next morning I came down to breakfaſt with a violent head-ach. Mrs. Ellis obſerved I looked very languid, and preſſed me not to purſue my journey until the next day; but I reſolved to go on to London, ſleep there, and ſet off early in the morning for Dover. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore accompanied me. I could not ſuppreſs a flood of tears when I took leave of Sudbury: what happy hours have I ſpent in that neighbourhood! When I paſſed the church, where my dear parents lay, free from all their cares, unconſcious of the diſtreſſes which their unfortunate daughter had to encounter with, my eyes ſtreamed afreſh, and painful remembrance overwhelmed me with ſorrow. My kind friends, without taking notice of my emotions, endeavoured to amuſe my mind by various remarks on the paſſing objects. We got ſafe to London, ſpent the night there; I ſent off a meſſenger to my uncle, to let him know of my arrival, and take his directions.

He

He came back with a letter addreſſed to the Superior of the convent, Madame St. Joſeph, and a line, wiſhing me a good journey. This cruel indifference, I own, cut me to the heart; but contempt ſucceeded my firſt feelings, and I rallied my ſpirits to ſupport me through. Not to be tedious, we got ſafe to Dover, and embarked the ſame night in a packet for Boulogne, where we arrived about ſeven the next morning; and taking ſome refreſhment, proceeded on to Abbeville.

When we arrived at the convent, when the great gates were unbarred with tremendous noiſe, and when my friends were compelled to leave me, O! my dear Lady Wentworth, the horror of that moment will never be forgotten. The dear child, affrighted at the noiſe and my tears, clung to poor Patty, with terror in its looks. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore were drowned in tears. With repeated embraces we parted, unable to ſpeak. I followed the Portereſs: the great gates were cloſed, and five or ſix old nuns came out to welcome me as an inhabitant of their peaceful manſion. I returned their civilities in the beſt manner I could, but entreated to be conducted to my apartment, as I was overcome with laſſitude. I was accordingly ſhewn to my rooms. I was chilled with horror. They were white-waſhed, and only a ſmall bed in each room, with two chairs and a table. I threw myſelf into the firſt chair, and wept aloud, and then fell into a violent hyſteric, a thing unuſual with me. My poor girl, and two nuns who accompanied me, were frightened. Their kind endeavours ſoon recovered me to a ſenſe of my wretchedneſs; thus caſt off, branded with infamy, and given up to reproach,

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by thoſe who ought to have defended me againſt every injury.

A nun of the moſt enchanting appearance now entered with ſome refreſhments. She ſaluted me with a mildneſs and grace that inſenſibly engaged my particular notice: ſhe ſeemed gratified by it.

"Dear lady," ſaid ſhe, "let me entreat you to eat ſomething; compoſe your ſpirits; you will find here every one diſpoſed to ſerve and oblige you."

Her kindneſs and ſweetneſs of voice affected me. I complied with her requeſt; and taking a little wine and water, found myſelf revived. Having my own linen with me, we made ourſelves more comfortable; but my poor girl looked round her with terror and diſmay. I paſſed a ſleepleſs night; but in the morning I begged leave to have a little furniture for my apartments, which favour was granted; and by ſending into the town, I procured better accommodations.

I have now been here three days, and am become tolerably reconciled: indeed, I was aſhamed to let outward circumſtances ſo much diſcompoſe me, after preparing my mind to ſuffer much greater evils; after parting with my beloved friends, I had little cauſe to regret the inconveniencies of my preſent ſituation.

The attractive nun I mentioned, Madame St. Bernard, viſits me often. She is about eight and twenty, a lovely face, a pair of expreſſive eyes, and one of the moſt graceful figures I ever beheld. I cannot help ſighing to ſee ſo charming a woman ſecluded from the world; yet, if ſhe has *no* cauſe for *regret*, why ſhould I ſigh! What are the mighty pleaſures the world affords, that

can

can compenſate for the evils we are expoſed to from the unworthy part of it! To me, what has it been but a ſource of pain and anguiſh! In my earlier days, I ſaw a beloved mother hourly declining; I followed her to the grave; I was witneſs to the ſorrows of a father; and when time had ſoftened grief, and his emotions grew more compoſed, then his anxiety for his children's deſtiny preyed on his mind. By the perſuaſion of a ſelfiſh relation, he did violence to my feelings and his own. Riches and grandeur were to procure happineſs. Alas! how deceitful the hope, how vain the expectations fixed on ſo ſlight a foundation! They have vaniſhed from me like a dream. Happineſs I never taſted, at leaſt not thoſe tumultuous emotions, not that wonderful flow of ſpirits, that gratification in public places and amuſements, which appeared to make others happy. While Mr. Menville was pleaſed with me, I felt both gratitude and affection, and in his felicity I found mine. Now, my proſpects are dark and gloomy, little to hope for, much leſs to expect. For my Emily's ſake I wiſh to live: may ſhe be more fortunate than her unhappy mother! Why then ſhould I regret the charming St. Bernard's ſecluſion from a world of diſappointment and ſorrow! O! ſhe is happy, very happy; ſhe has no huſband, no child, to make thoſe painful drawbacks on the kindneſs of her friends which I experience.—I muſt lay aſide my pen.

I reſume it in better ſpirits. I have juſt received a letter from Mrs. Colemore: they are ſafely arrived at Dover. Thank Heaven, they have not ſuffered from their generous attention to me.

Forgive

Forgive me, my dear Lady Wentworth, for depreſſing your ſpirits by my melancholy: I will ſtrive againſt it, and I ſhall *conquer*; I will conſider, that to have my mind ſubdued, my health deſtroyed, will gratify my enemies. No—they ſhall not triumph over me. I will enumerate my comforts, not dwell on my vexations: the ſmiles of my Emily, the kindneſs of my friends, ſhall ſupport me; the engaging nun will entertain me; I will ſtudy French, that I may ſpeak it with more propriety; I will have an inſtrument, and harmonize my uneaſy thoughts, when they ariſe, by muſic. In ſhort, I will ſeek for amuſement, and enjoy it.

I have half a mind to write this letter over again; but it may go; you will allow for the firſt painful feelings in ſuch a ſituation; and as I repeat that I am more compoſed, more eaſy, and *determined* to continue ſo, I hope my dear Lady Wentworth will give me credit on the ſcore of my former fortitude, nor be diſpleaſed at my want of reſolution on my firſt entrance here.—Write ſoon and often: your letters conſtitute great part of my happineſs; for I am ever

Your obliged,

And affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

HERE I am, ſafely landed at Dover, after a very bad paſſage, which has ſo much diſcompoſed me, that I ſhall ſtay a day and a night to reſt myſelf, for I really am not fit to purſue my journey at preſent. After all, Jack, though I regretted the circumſtance when in Paris, I now rejoice that Menville was not there: I have ſuch a hatred and contempt for him, that, perhaps, if we *had* met, an event might have taken place, which of all others I wiſh to avoid. Miſtake me not; I am not afraid of meeting Menville in the field, could his death or mine enſure the happineſs of his lovely wife: but if *he* fell, I know the ſtrictneſs of her principles, ſhe would never ſee me more, nor could I expect it; if *I* had fallen, her ſituation might have been made worſe from

from the brutality of her huſband, but never could have been changed for the better by that circumſtance. So that, all things conſidered, I think it is beſt as it is.

O! Jack, Jack, ſuch intelligence; who ſhould be now in this very inn, but Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, juſt arrived from France, after leaving Mrs. Menville in a convent; but in what part of France they dare not tell me without her permiſſion. Curſed fate! *ſhe* in a convent! I aſked if by her own wiſhes? The anſwer was in the affirmative; but it was given in ſuch a manner, that I doubt they wiſhed to deceive me. Mrs. Colemore is greatly dejected, Colemore is very grave, and I am half mad. We ſhall ſet off together to-morrow morning. I ſhall not cloſe this letter until I can pick up ſome farther intelligence.

I am now in my own lodgings, without having obtained the leaſt degree of information. Colemore very candidly and kindly ſaid, "I do aſſure you, Mr. Martin, was I at liberty to reveal Mrs. Menville's reſidence, I would not do it: ſhe ſuffers already under ſuſpicions ſhe would diſdain to incur; and where jealouſy and a malignant heart are on the watch, to improve the moſt trivial circumſtances into crimes, the intereſt you take in her affairs might moſt materially affect and hurt her. We ſhall be always glad to ſee you at Sudbury; your eſteem for an amiable woman recommends you to Mrs. Colemore. Every intelligence we can give you, conſiſtent with our own honour, and the reſtrictions Mrs. Menville has impoſed upon us, you may command: but do not let your zeal injure her you wiſh to ſerve. She will owe nothing to the interpoſition of friends;

friends; every thing muſt be left to her own prudence; and from *that*, in time, every thing may be expected we can either wiſh or deſire."

Diſappointed as I was, Jack, I acknowledged the juſtice of Mr. Colemore's obſervations, and promiſed to follow his advice.

This morning I met poor Thurkill, rich Thurkill I ſhould rather ſay, if he could obtain his money; but Menville retreating to France, his five thouſand pounds is not forth coming. He ſeems, however, very glad to be rid of his wife, and can well afford to pay her the 200l. a year from the 10,000l. he had with her; but he ſays, "No, the ſame award gave me 5,000l.; when ſhe draws on me, I will return a draft for the money on Menville. Let them try it if they will; I can but do as he has done: not a ſhilling ſhall ſhe receive from my hands."

I think the fellow right. He has given up his houſe, ſold his furniture, and taken proper care of all his money, if he does not loſe it by gambling.

I have this moment heard a piece of news which has pierced me to the heart: poor Smith, the hoſier, is become a bankrupt. I was told, ſince the death of Mary the father grew melancholy, neglected his buſineſs, his other children were too young to be uſeful, and the conſequence is, he is ruined. Jack, Jack, there is a day of retribution; my conſcience is wounded by the remembrance of the injuries I did that unfortunate family; and how many others may be ſufferers by my vices! Smith, however, I *will* relieve. He is in the Fleet: I haſten to him.

I am

I am returned, overwhelmed with ſorrow and remorſe. Such a ſcene! Good God! Let the ſenſualiſt, the libertine, the hardened uſurer, attend the priſons, and behold the many wretched victims, ſome to their own vices, ſome to the vices and cruelties of others; let them ſee ſuch ſcenes as *I have this day*, and they will feel as I do now; horror and repentance will aſſail their boſoms, and they would gladly give up millions, if they had them, to avoid the ſtings of conſcience.

When I entered the lobby, I enquired for Mr. Smith, and was directed to his room on the ſecond floor, in ſuch a diſtrict! Fearful that my preſence would hurt, I ſent up a little note, "A gentleman who has greatly injured Mr. Smith, feels the deepeſt repentance, and is deſirous of making every recompence in his power." I was deſired to walk up. I entered a very ſmall room; facing the door lay a man extended on a bed. Smith was ſitting at a table near the ſmall window, his head reſting on his hand. When he ſaw me, (I was unable to ſpeak) he ſtarted up. "Gracious God!" cried he, "the murderer of my child! How dare you, Sir, ——"

He could ſay no more, but ſunk in his chair, and burſt into tears. I was greatly affected myſelf; but drawing near him, "Suffer me, Mr. Smith, to aſſure you of my ſincere concern to ſee you in this ſituation. I heard of it only this morning, and am come to offer you every aſſiſtance my fortune can give you."

"No, no," repeated he with quickneſs, "I want nothing; I will accept of no favours from the deſtroyer of my poor Mary."

"You

" You cannot, Sir, feel more ſenſibly, nor with more indignation of my paſt conduct than I do: but do not carry your reſentment to an unjuſtifiable length; ſuffer me to make what reparation is in my power; and remember, that to forgive injuries is the part of a Chriſtian."

" Pray, pray leave me; I want no aſſiſtance; I cannot bear to look at you. O! my child! my Mary, a victim to deceit and wickedneſs! I will owe nothing to thy aſſaſſin!"

" I *cannot* leave you, Mr. Smith," returned I; " you will owe me nothing: by putting it in my power to oblige you, to ſerve you, on me the favour is conferred. I am an altered man; I ſee the folly of my former conduct; I have deeply repented my behaviour in your family. Will you not encourage that repentance? Will you be more ſevere than God?"

He ſtarted, and looked at me.—" You mention the name of God, take care, Sir, you do not deceive yourſelf; but if you do repent, God forbid I ſhould withhold my pardon for the miſeries you have brought upon me and mine. I forgive you, Sir; but leave me."

" Not now; you have pronounced my pardon; let me beſeech you, Mr. Smith, to open your affairs to me."

After many arguments, to little purpoſe, the man on the bed raiſed himſelf, and with a feeble voice, " Mr. Smith, be perſuaded: you have children, conſider them: you have ſtill duties to fulfil. Your ſorrow for the loſs of one ſhould not make you unjuſt to others. You muſt one day die: you will need forgiveneſs from the Almighty; deny it not to a repentant man. Accept his offers for your children's ſake."

Poor

Poor Smith claſped his hands. "My worthy friend, I will obey your admonitions. O!" ſaid he, turning to me, "that you had viſited this place ſooner; you might then, by timely benevolence, have preſerved that poor man's life."

"And why not preſerve it now?" cried I, going to the bed. "Does any phyſician attend him? What is his diſorder?"

"Paſt all cure," replied the ſick man; "a broken heart, worn down by ſorrow, a victim to vice and injuſtice, betrayed by my friend, forſaken by a wife I doated on, perſecuted, abandoned, and betrayed, what have I to do with life! I reſign it without a pang; I look forward with hope, as to the end of a long and painful journey."

I requeſted a phyſician might be ſent for. He came. I entreated him conſider the patient's caſe: after a little conſideration, he pronounced it hopeleſs.

"I told you," ſaid the poor man, "it was to no purpoſe. I feel, a ſhort time will releae me from pain and ſorrow.——Mr. Smith, *you* are a *father*; remember your duties as ſuch: accept the ſervices of a repentant man, and God bleſs you all."

He then lay quiet and compoſed. I enquired of Mr. Smith the cauſe of his ſorrows.

"They are briefly theſe," replied he: "This gentleman was a merchant in the city: he married a very beautiful and portionleſs young woman: ſhe was gay, admired, and expenſive. A friend of his came from the weſt of England on a viſit; he was received with kindneſs and diſtinction. He paid particular attention to the wife of his friend, who unſuſpectingly recommended each to the other.

'One day this kind friend was more than particularly uneaſy. The poor man preſent enquired into the cauſe. "He had given a bond for three thouſand pounds; he was unable to pay it, and expected nothing leſs than a priſon."

'His friend, with a warm enthuſiaſm, bid him not deſpair; though juſt at that time not in caſh himſelf, he knew thoſe who would ſupply him. He accordingly went among his friends, procured the ſum wanted, and ſettled it, that the money might arrive in time to ſupply his wants. The obliged friend promiſed to reimburſe him in a month, a fortnight ſooner than the other had engaged for with his friends; nor had he the ſmalleſt doubt of its payment.

'Within ten days after this tranſaction, going out one day on 'Change, on his return to dinner, his wife was not at home. He waited paſt the dining-hour; ſhe did not return, nor his friend. Still unſuſpecting, he eat his dinner, and ſuppoſed they had accidentally been delayed. Evening, night came on, no wife nor friend, he began to be alarmed, ſent every where in ſearch of them, in vain. He paſſed a wretched night. In the morning a gentleman accidentally called in, and ſaid he had met Mr. —— and Mrs. —— in a poſtchaiſe, the day before, near Sittingbourne.

'This was almoſt a death-ſtroke. On enquiry, he found, they had not only taken every thing of value with them, but had alſo taken up a large property on credit. The time came on for payment of the money he had borrowed to ſupply his kind friend; he was unprepared, was arreſted; all his creditors fell in upon him: he was thrown into this priſon, without one kind ſympathizing

friend

friend to conſole him. Grief, ſorrow, diſappointment, and want of proper neceſſaries, preyed on his mind, and threw him into a rapid decline. He now views the hour approach, with tranſport, that is to take him from a falſe, ungrateful world. He has never heard the leaſt tidings of his wife nor her ſeducer; and 'tis ſuppoſed they are on the Continent, enjoying their ill-gotten ſpoils.'

This tale of woe ſpoke volumes to my heart. When I firſt knew Mrs. Menville, how baſe were my deſigns; how villainous my intentions! That charming woman taught me the difference between virtue and vice. I am her proſelyte; and every good action of my future life I owe to her alone.

I ſent, however, for ſome wine, ſome biſcuits, and other neceſſaries, with a proper nurſe to attend this poor gentleman. I took an account of Mr. Smith's debts, and to-morrow I hope to ſet him free: death will ſoon releaſe the other. I viſited ſeveral other rooms, where miſery and ſickneſs were added to the horrors of a priſon. Some diſſipated, riotous perſons I ſaw there, and doubtleſs many undeſerving the leaſt compaſſion; but without a nice inveſtigation, it is difficult to diſcriminate; and as few people take the trouble to do that, the profligate, the gambler, the diſhoneſt, are all huddled together with the good and unfortunate, equally unbefriended and diſregarded. Surely the regulations of the priſons, the inſpection of characters, are matters highly proper for the legiſlature to take notice of; a diſcrimination might eaſily be made by the marſhal and keepers of the priſons, and a bill framed to relieve the

unfortunate, without permitting the worthleſs to be benefitted by it.

I propoſe either ſettling Mr. Smith in buſineſs, or to make him a handſome yearly allowance, with a certain ſum for his children, which ever ſhall be moſt acceptable to him.

Now, Jack, you will not doubt but my good purpoſes are all confirmed, ſince you ſee I am in earneſt to make what reparation is in my power to thoſe I have injured.

My Smith is at liberty. He has accepted enough to re-eſtabliſh himſelf in buſineſs with an honeſt, intelligent young man, who lived with him ſome years. He inſiſts upon paying intereſt for the money advanced, and a bond, which bond I juſt now threw in the fire, that, as life is uncertain, it may never appear againſt him from any heirs of mine.

The poor merchant is alive, but it is ſuppoſed this night will be his laſt; and I have left orders for every accommodation his ſituation will admit of.—Believe me, I have found more real ſatiſfaction within theſe two days than I have experienced for many years.—Adieu, Jack; take example, and be happy.

Sincerely your's,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY dear, my beloved friend, how are you? My cheek ſtill feels thoſe tears that fell upon them when you embraced me for the laſt time. O! what a moment! to leave you immured within the walls of a convent, without one ſympathizing aſſociate to reconcile you to a ſituation ſo forlorn and melancholy. I impatiently expect a letter. Heaven grant your health may not ſuffer under ſuch oppreſſions.

When we arrived at Dover, who ſhould we meet with but Martin: he was juſt arrived from France in a different packet. As we could not conceal our buſineſs there, the man was almoſt beſide himſelf: but we kept your ſecret faithfully as to your place of reſidence, and inſiſted upon his not interfering in the affair with any of your friends. He faithfully promiſed to obſerve our requeſt.

requeſt. I am very much pleaſed with him; his behaviour, his converſation is ſo entirely different from the opinion we once entertained of him, that I really believe he is, what he wiſhes to be thought, a reformed man. The ſincerity of his eſteem for you cannot be queſtioned. He told Mr. Colemore, "When I firſt knew Mrs. Menville, I was an abandoned fellow; I wiſhed, I ſtudied to ſeduce her, even before I thought Menville treated her ill. The ſtrict propriety of her behaviour always awed me; but on a particular occaſion, when I forced myſelf into her preſence, I received a check which has influenced my conduct ever ſince. I adore her ſtill, but with that virtuous paſſion, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, that has no other wiſh, no other view but her happineſs, independent of any gratification to myſelf."

Do you not congratulate yourſelf on having made ſuch a total revolution of manners?—On our arrival at Sudbury, we found our friends extremely anxious on your account. My father bids me tell you to be careful of your health and ſpirits, and aſſure yourſelf, many, very many happy days await you yet.

Your letter is this moment delivered.—Thank Heaven you are ſo well reconciled to your ſituation. Pray encourage the attention of the amiable St. Bernard: I love her already for her kindneſs to you. I expect to hear the hiſtory of ſeveral of your nuns; for I cannot be perſuaded, but that far the greater part of them are placed there by compulſion; and if any inclination for the world ſtill dwells on their minds, how wretched muſt the poor creatures feel!

Miſs

Miſs Neville has had another epiſtle from her ſiſter. Within ten days or a fortnight, we may expect the whole party. We are looking out for a houſe in our neighbourhood for Mrs. Neville, and I promiſe myſelf much pleaſure from the acquaintance.

Pray write ſoon; for, although your's muſt be a very ſtill life, and afford but little variety, yet conſtant information of your health is neceſſary to our happineſs here.

Every thing expreſſive of affection and the moſt perfect eſteem, my friends deſire me to ſay for them; and I know your heart will do juſtice to mine, and believe me ever

Your truly affectionate,

And obliged,

E. M. COLEMORE.

My father has juſt received a letter from Anthony. He is in Bruſſels, and has drawn for a ſum much beyond his ſettled allowance. My father will honour *this* bill, but intends to write the young gentleman, future requeſts of that kind will be refuſed.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

My dear Mrs. Menville, your letter, which I received yeſterday, has in ſome meaſure relieved my anxiety, although it coſt me a flood of tears, particularly the firſt part. O! my friend, keep up your ſpirits, and you will yet triumph over your perſecutors, and cover them with confuſion.

Some very intereſting ſcenes have taken place here within this laſt fortnight. About that time arrived at Spa, Count Oſſuana and his two daughters, who, it appears, had been on very friendly terms with Captain Harley, during his ſhort reſidence at Madrid. (Mrs. Colemore knows all the particulars.) Of courſe Harley waited on them, and was obliged to devote great part of his time to the ſervice of the ladies. He one day requeſted me to permit him the honour of introducing them that evening to me, as we were all to meet at the Dutcheſs of C———'s aſſembly.

aſſembly. I could not certainly make any objections. We met, and Harley led me to the ladies, who received me with the utmoſt politeneſs, and gracefully thanked me for the honour of my notice. They are lovely women: the eldeſt, Antonia, has ſuch ſweetneſs and ſenſibility in her countenance, as intereſts you, and engages eſteem: the younger, Iſabella, is a moſt elegant figure, with an air of grandeur that repulſes freedom, and commands reſpect; and, though a much finer woman, never, I think, will gain the admiration which her ſiſter invites, and ſhe demands.

In the courſe of the evening, I made my obſervations: the beauteous Antonia could not conceal her partiality to Harley; I ſaw it in every glance and motion: on the contrary, Iſabella, though ſhe preſerved outward forms of good breeding, looked at him with diſdain and diſlike.

I received an invitation to breakfaſt with them the next morning; Harley with me. When he called, curioſity induced me to remark the different behaviour of the ladies, and enquire into the cauſe. He then entered into a detail of his acquaintance with them, and with which, Mrs. Colemore being informed, poſſibly you are no ſtranger to, He added, that Antonia, reſolute in her refuſal of the Duke de Solis, after Harley's departure, had incurred the diſpleaſure of her father, and had been treated very ſeverely, which had deeply affected her health and ſpirits. Her ſiſter conſtantly reproached her for her preference of an Engliſhman, and an heretic, though ſhe had generoſity enough not to mention it to her

father, who, finding her health in a very precarious ſtate, propoſed this journey to Spa.

She ſaid, her father having a great eſteem for Captain Harley, and doing *more juſtice* to her ſentiments for him than her ſiſter had done, was glad to meet him there: on the contrary, Iſabella upbraided her with keeping a correſpondence, and giving him intimation of this journey. "Conſcious," added Antonia, "that I have only a *proper* ſenſe of Captain Harley's merits, and that I am unjuſtly ſuſpected, I find it very difficult to conduct myſelf in ſuch a manner as I wiſh to do, without juſtifying the ſuſpicions ſhe entertains, or treating a worthy man with a coldneſs he does not deſerve."

This was what Antonia told Harley; and he was, he ſaid, equally puzzled how to act in this delicate buſineſs.

We attended the ladies at breakfaſt. Sir Charles, who underſtands Spaniſh, received abundance of civilities from the Count, who complimented him on ſpeaking a language few Engliſh gentlemen paid any attention to. The ladies, particularly Antonia, were profuſe in their expreſſions of polite acknowledgments for my condeſcenſion, as they choſe to ſtyle it; but the French language is ſo copious, and ſo polite, that they always exaggerate in their compliments. I was very much charmed with my reception, ſo unlike that ſtiffneſs we naturally expect from the Spaniſh ladies. But they informed me their mother was a native of France; and the Count, in compliment to her taſte, relaxed very much in his manners, of which this journey was a proof, as the Spaniſh women, in general, ſeldom travel beyond their

own

own country. We prevailed on them to favour us the following day to dinner, and took leave, mutually pleaſed with each other.

Our company came; the ladies moſt elegantly dreſſed. I really think the Spaniſh habit the moſt becoming in the world. I introduced my aunt and Mrs. Neville, who were ſtruck with admiration at the beautiful ſiſters.

After dinner, when we retired, Antonia complained of a little faintneſs. I attended her into the garden; ſhe grew better.

"You know not, my dear lady," ſaid ſhe, "how partial I am to the Engliſh; and that partiality daily increaſes. Great are our obligations to Captain Harley for procuring us the honour we now enjoy. Your aunt is a charming woman; and Mrs. Neville, I think you called her, one of the moſt prepoſſeſſing figures I ever ſaw; ſo gentle, ſo intereſting, ſo amiable. Pardon my curioſity; Is ſhe a widow?"

"She is, Madam," I replied; "her huſband has been dead about two months."

"I thought ſo from her black dreſs. She ſeems intimately acquainted with Captain Harley."

"Yes, Madam, he was a particular friend of Mr. Neville's."

"I think," ſaid ſhe, with a faint ſmile, "I think it not impoſſible he may hereafter be a particular friend of her's alſo. They ſeem attached to each other."

"Only as friends, Madam," I replied. "Captain Harley will never think of Mrs. Neville in any other point of view."

"Indeed!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed ſhe; then, after a little pauſe, added, "He is a moſt amiable man; I am ſurpriſed he remains unmarried."

"A diſappointment in his firſt attachment, Madam, I believe, precludes all thought of any engagement at preſent."

"I am grieved to hear that," returned ſhe, in a faltering voice; "may I aſk what impeded his firſt attachment from taking place?"

"The lady's relations, Madam, propoſed a better match in point of fortune, and ſhe thought it her duty to follow their advice, and obey their commands."

"Then I pity both," ſaid ſhe; "the lady was a heroine, and I hope is happy. Poor Captain Harley, how I grieve for him. And is the lady married?"

"She is, Madam."

"Ah! well," cried ſhe, ſighing, "I wiſh I had her reſolution. My father wants me to marry; but I cannot, no, I *cannot* obey him, ſhould he place me in a convent for life.—I have been very impertinent, Madam, in aſking ſo many queſtions: will you forgive me?"

I preſſed her hand. "Dear Madam, you do me honour."

We now returned to the houſe: ſhe took very polite notice of Mrs. Neville. I ſaw ſufficient to aſſure me, her being *only* the *friend* of Captain Harley had given her an additional claim to the notice of the fair Antonia. In the courſe of the evening was mentioned our intended departure within a fortnight.

"I hope not," ſaid the Count; "it will be mortifying indeed, to have begun an acquaintance which

which promiſes us ſo much honour and pleaſure, if we are ſo ſoon to be deprived of it. We propoſe ſtaying ſix weeks; cannot you," continued he, addreſſing my uncle and Sir Charles, "cannot you, gentlemen, prevail on the ladies to ſuſpend their journey for that time?"

"I have no objection," cried my uncle; "I am a citizen of the world, my Lord: when my family is with me, all places are alike."

Sir Charles replied, "If the ladies can be perſuaded, I ſhall not form a ſingle objection."

"Very pretty, indeed," cried I; "here you are arrogating to yourſelves all the merit, if there is any, of complying with his Lordſhip's obliging requeſt, and the negative is to be thrown upon us: but if the ladies think like me, we will take our revenge."

"You ſhall decide for me, my dear," ſaid my aunt, ſmiling.

"You are ſure of my vote, Madam," added Mrs. Neville.

"Why then, my good Lord and Ladies, our leave of abſence is prolonged: we females will remain ſome time longer, to profit by the honour of your acquaintance. My uncle being an invalid, ſhall be permitted to ſtay and re-eſtabliſh his health. But as for Sir Charles, Mr. Sackville, and Captain Harley, we will ſend them to England, as uſeleſs lumber, to lay by in the houſe till it ſuits us to return."

They all laughed exceſſively at my deciſion. Our gueſts expreſſed much gratitude for our complaiſance. The gentlemen, in a very humble manner, entreated permiſſion to remain as part of our ſuite; and, upon promiſe of good behaviour,

viour, we extended our mercy towards them. But I have more than once repented my promiſe.

The gentle Antonia is deeply devoted to Captain Harley: it is love, under the maſk of friendſhip, which deſtroys her health, and preys upon her mind. Friendſhip! thou inſidious, inſinuating name; thou bane to happineſs between man and woman; thou ſelf-deceiver, leading on a delicate mind, by gentle and imperceptible degrees, till the veil is withdrawn, and love, with all its train of ills, ſtands open and confeſſed! Ah! my dear Mrs. Menville, that unreſerved confidence and attention which is permitted under the name of friendſhip, is often productive of great miſery, and the nobleſt paſſion of the ſoul made ſubſervient to the vileſt purpoſes. In ſhort, few men have delicacy enough to diveſt themſelves of ſelfiſhneſs in their acquaintance with our ſex. But here I muſt acquit Captain Harley. His addreſs to Antonia is highly reſpectful and obliging, but without the leaſt tenderneſs or freedom; he does not ſeem to *court* her notice, though grateful for any marks of it: *he is not in love, ſhe* certainly *is*, and unwittingly, I believe; and as every day appears to add ſtrength to it, I repent that we have promiſed to ſtay. I believe Mrs. Neville does the ſame, for ſhe has been unuſually depreſſed in ſpirits for this week paſt.

We ſhall not now leave Spa for this month to come: pray, therefore, my beloved friend, write very often: depend upon my prudence; nothing ſhall tranſpire you wiſh to have a ſecret from others.

The

The requeſt I made in my laſt letter, which you had not received when you wrote, I ſhall expect you comply with, if you love or eſteem,

Your affectionate,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

YOUR kind conſoling letter, my dear Lady Wentworth, is juſt come to hand; and believe me, no human being can be more truly ſenſible of your kindneſs than I am. If I accepted a favour from any perſon living, it ſhould be from you; nay, more, if ever I want your aſſiſtance, you ſhall not charge me with an undue pride in declining it: but at preſent I am very rich; I have nearly four hundred pounds by me, beſides a hundred and fifty pounds a year, which is more than ſufficient for all my wants, even in a convent, where, as you juſtly obſerve, they proportion their reſpect to your appearance.

I thank Heaven, my health and ſpirits are perfectly good. I have met with ſeveral moſt agreeable women here, though none equal to my firſt favourite, Madam St. Bernard, with whom you ſhall be better acquainted by and bye. The nuns doat

doat on children. Emily has got the better of her firſt diſlike to their dreſs and figure; ſhe is with them great part of the day, and they are really emulous who ſhall ſhew the little creature moſt attention. The exact regularity in their devotions, and in their meals, and even in the few recreations they allow themſelves, is admirable; their looks, their motions, are ſerene, humble, and obliging: moſt of them look happy; I hope they are ſo; yet I have my doubts ſometimes.

I have now been here a fortnight: every thing is tranquil and quiet. How I envy thoſe who live in this peaceful manſion from inclination; they have never known ſuch ſorrows as have harrowed up my peace, and deſtroyed my happineſs for ever! But, not to dwell too much on ſelf, I will ſpeak of my amiable Madame St. Bernard. She has been moſt particularly attentive to me; the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, and the lovelineſs of her perſon, intereſt you greatly in her behalf. She was the other evening with me, when my ſpirits were rather low.

"My dear lady," ſaid ſhe, "let me entreat you to conſider your ſweet child; keep up your ſpirits for her ſake. I know not what the nature of your afflictions may be; but I know few in this life are exempt from ſorrow."

"I hope, my worthy friend," replied I, "*you*, at leaſt, are one of the exceptions."

"Very far from it, I aſſure you," anſwered ſhe. "I have ſuffered ſeverely, and am a victim to the vices and extravagances of thoſe who ought to have been my protectors. To amuſe and change the current of your grief into another channel, I will give you my hiſtory."

"I was

'I was born of a noble family. Unhappily, my parents died when I was unconſcious of the greatneſs of my loſs. I had two brothers: the eldeſt had my father's title; the younger one was in the army. I was placed in this convent for education. My brother, the Marquis, paid my penſion regularly, and I was allowed a very handſome ſum for clothes and pocket expences.

'When I was about ſeventeen, a young Engliſh lady, who was a Penſioner, had a brother came to ſee her. She took me with her to the grate. I ſaw he was a very agreeable man; but I took no particular notice of him. The next time he came I was engaged, and did not attend her. She told me, on her return, that her brother was much charmed with me, had aſked a hundred queſtions relative to my friends and ſituation, and *requeſted* to ſee me the following day. Novice, as I was, to the world, I ſaw the impropriety of this requeſt, and ſteadily declined it. What paſſed between them I know not; but, with all the impetuoſity of his country, when eager in purſuit, he applied to my brother, the Marquis, told him of his prepoſſeſſion in my favour, and begged permiſſion to make his addreſſes to me. The Marquis was ſurpriſed and vexed. He declined making an immediate anſwer, under the pretence of conſulting his brother.

'The next day my brothers came to the convent, upbraided me in the ſevereſt terms for admitting the addreſſes of an Engliſhman and an heretic; and, far from believing my aſſeverations to the contrary, loaded me with reproaches, and inſiſted that I ſhould enter upon my noviciate, as it was my father's requeſt, and their deſign

to

to make me a nun. I own to you, my dear Madam, I had no aſpirations at that time to profeſs myſelf; I was therefore very much diſpleaſed at information I never expected. Whatever arguments I uſed were treated with diſdain and contempt; nothing could alter their purpoſe. They requeſted of the Abbeſs I might never more be permitted to attend the grate, without their orders, and that I might begin my noviciate immediately.—Every deſire was complied with; I was no more in the habit of ſeeing my friend, but at the refectory, or in church, and then a hundred eyes were upon us. Stupid, and overcome by this ſevere treatment, I ſubmitted, without ſtruggle, to the evils I could not prevent.

'One day I obſerved a great buſtle in the claſs I belonged to. My young Engliſh friend, I was informed, was to quit the convent. We were not permitted to take leave, but before the whole community.

"My deareſt Louiſa," ſaid ſhe, "may all good angels guard you. Do not take the veil; wait for happier times."

'Two of the nuns interrupted her, and led her away: I was drowned in tears.

'The following day I received a letter from my brother, the Marquis, telling me Sir Edward Southwell and my younger brother had fought on the frontiers; both were deſperately wounded, and their lives uncertain. He ſaid, my infamous behaviour had diſgraced my family, and brought both ſhame and ſorrow on them; that they never would ſee me more until I was profeſſed, the only expiation I could now make for my crimes.

'Judge,

'Judge, dear Madam, what I felt at this letter. Conſcious innocence availed nothing againſt paſſion, prejudice, and cruelty; tho' I appealed to Heaven I had never ſeen Sir Edward but once, and was entirely a ſtranger to all his proceedings; nothing I could ſay was believed; I was treated like an infamous creature, and commanded to take the veil. The abſurdity was obvious: had I been the perſon they ſuppoſed me, unfit to enter into the world, ſurely I was leſs qualified to dedicate myſelf to God. However they were obſtinate: I grew indifferent what became of me; and when my year of probation expired, aſſumed the name of St. Bernard took the veil without reluctance, and from that time have ſought to accommodate my mind to my ſituation. There are times when my heart proves refractory, but I try to ſubdue its murmurs, and remember my vows to Heaven.

'I had the happineſs to hear both gentlemen recovered from their raſhneſs.—My brother, the Marquis, viſits me now and then, and enjoys the fortune my father and uucle left me, and to which, I believe, I became the ſacrifice.'

"This is briefly my ſtory, dear Madam. Many in this convent are victims to the pride and avarice of their relations. Some there are whom choice has induced to become nuns, but they are comparatively few; and, ſerene and tranquil as we appear to be, I fear every paſſion of the human heart prevails among us, as with thoſe who reſide in the great world: envy, jealouſy, and malice are to be traced in many; and very few are exempt from the weakneſſes of human nature."

Here

Here the amiable nun ſtopped. I embraced her fervently; I told her whilſt I reſided in that monaſtery, I would endeavour to cultivate her eſteem, and profit by her converſation. She wiſhed me not to ſhew her any particular attention. "If it is noticed," ſaid ſhe, "perhaps I may be laid under reſtrictions; and becoming an object of jealouſy, ſhall not have it in my power to render you the little ſervices I wiſh."

What a melancholy ſituation to be *compelled* to take thoſe vows which ſhut from the world for ever many amiable women, who might have been a bleſſing and an ornament to ſociety. Few things in this life, my dear Lady Wentworth, would give me equal pleaſure to the delight of ſeeing you; but it cannot be; and I have only to hope that at ſome future period I may enjoy that deſirable bleſſing.

I am become perfectly reconciled to my ſituation. The nuns are pleaſed with my behaviour; I conform to all their rules without any reluctance. They adore my child, and that is the avenue to the heart of a mother. St. Bernard told me, ſhe was informed, a gentleman had applied to have a lady, (whoſe huſband was going abroad,) and a child, received as boarders, and to be accommodated with *every convenience* the rules of the houſe would admit of. This information has pleaſed me. It ſhews ſome delicacy as to my reputation, and a deſire that I ſhould not ſuffer greater inconveniencies than the confinement, which to me is nothing.

I hope to hear from you very ſoon, and entreat you, my dear friend, not to be offended that I decline your generous offer of an addition to my income.

income. I pay but ſeventy pounds a-year for myſelf, child, and ſervant; I have therefore eighty for extra expences, which is much more than I can want, independent of the money by me. You ſee, therefore, I am as rich as I can wiſh to be. Clothes, thanks to Mr. Menville's liberality, I have in ſuch abundance, I cannot have occaſion to purchaſe theſe ſeven years at leaſt.

I am moſt ſincerely rejoiced at the reſtoration of your uncle's health; alſo that Mrs. Neville ſubmits to the diſpenſations of Providence as becomes a woman of ſenſe and a chriſtian.

I frequently think, when in the church here, which is moſt beautifully decorated, that if our churches were more ornamented, it would create greater awe and reſpect, particularly among the lower claſs of people. There is a ſolemnity in the riches which adorn the altar; there is a certain reſpectful deference we feel for the prieſts in their truly-beautiful robes, which ſeldom fail to inſpire devotion; and though their ornaments may ſometimes be too ſhewy, yet our's are ſurely too plain, and do not convey to the mind that ſublimity, that reſpectful adoration, with which we ought to addreſs the Supreme being. I confeſs to you, I feel more devotion in this church than ever I experienced in any other, though without the ſmalleſt inclination of becoming a catholic; for I am not blind to the extravagant ſuperſtition and abſurd cuſtoms I hourly ſee and hear. I only think that in our endeavours to root out popery, deſtroying images, and diſmantling the churches of all ornaments, we have gone too far, made our places of worſhip *too* plain; and partly by leſſening the reſpect due to clergymen,

men, if they behave with propriety, in giving them ſuch ſcanty incomes, as render them rather objects of pity (too often of contempt) than of reſpect and eſteem; and by the very indifferent, and often ruinous ſtate in which our churches are, they fail to inſpire that devotion which grandeur and ſolemnity moſt aſſuredly raiſe and animate in our minds. But I have done: I am not competent to this ſubject, and only wiſh it was in abler hands.

My beſt reſpects and grateful thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Moleſworth, Mr. Sackville, and Mrs. Neville, for the intereſt they take in my affairs; nor will I withhold them from Captain Harley; for why ſhould I think leſs favourably of his friendſhip than of others? Yet I muſt ſtill requeſt he may know as little of me as poſſible.—I am ever, with every friendly ſentiment,

Your obliged, and grateful,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

HOW happy are we, my dear Mrs. Menville, in the receipt of your laſt kind letter, in which you tell us you are in health and good ſpirits. My admirable friend, perſevere in your endeavours to preſerve both, and all will yet be well. You are tried in the ſchool of affliction, and like pure gold, will come forth without any alloy; you will ſhine the brighter from all the baſe attempts to obſcure your luſtre. Miſs Neville has heard from her ſiſter, their return to England is poſtponed for a month longer; we have however taken a houſe, which will be ready for their reception by that time. We had a viſit from Mr. Martin laſt week, the alteration in him is wonderful, he is now, in every ſenſe of the word, a reſpectable man; he muſt have had

had naturally a good mind, but fortune, faſhion, and an early independence, led him into folly and vice; a virtuous paſſion for an eſtimable woman, and the impoſſibility of ever obtaining the object of his wiſhes, has given a new turn to his mind, has humanized it, brought him to a ſenſe of his former errors, and an earneſt deſire to make all the reparation poſſible. We are exceedingly pleaſed with him; Mr. Colemore preſſed him to ſtay a week with us, and he is now actually in the houſe. We have heard ſome very unpleaſant accounts of your brother Anthony, he is ſtill in Bruſſels, living at a very extravagant rate, which 'tis impoſſible his income can ſupport, eſpecially as 'tis ſaid he plays very high; my father is uneaſy, and wrote to him by laſt poſt, ſome remonſtrances on the ſubject, but if I know the young man, thoſe remonſtrances will produce only contempt and diſregard. He muſt *feel* firſt, I believe, before he will pay attention to the advice of his friends. We have had a morning viſit from Lord Longfield, to take leave of us previous to his leaving town, and going to the continent; how earneſt were his enquiries after Mrs. Menville, how anxious his wiſhes for her happineſs! he is a charming man, a character ſo truly valuable, exacts the higheſt reſpect. He told me Mr. Chapman, the melancholy man, expreſſed great regret at parting with him, but could not be perſuaded to forſake his cottage, or give up his walks on the hill; his Lordſhip ſaid, "Before my departure, by degrees I drew him into an acquaintance with my chaplain, who is alſo curate of the pariſh; he is a very worthy man, and of a reſerved and ſedentary diſpoſition; they appeared mutually pleaſed with each other,

and I requeſted they would conſider my houſe, gardens, park, &c. entirely as their own, and every thing in it, for their mutual accommodation. I have therefore hopes, continued he, that whenever I return to the Vale, I ſhall find him leſs abſtracted, and more companionable than when I left him." His Lordſhip could not be prevailed on to ſtay dinner, but entreated I would preſent his moſt reſpectful good wiſhes to you.

I think we may now daily expect to hear from my favourite Harry, if not from India, yet from the Cape or St. Helena; I hope his letters will not miſcarry, from Mr. Menville's abſence, and your reſidence unknown. Mr. Colemore goes to town next week, and will call at the India-Houſe, and make what arrangements he can, to prevent any miſtakes. We hear nothing of the Shepherd's, they have no correſpondents at Sudbury; ſtrange they ſhould leave it at their time of life; I am pretty ſure their *virtuous* daughter does not deſire their company; my firſt diſlike of that woman originated from her improper conduct to her parents. An impertinent, obſtinate daughter, can never be good in any relation through life; for if deficient in thoſe firſt duties of love and gratitude to the authors of her being, her heart muſt be corrupt, and her ſubſequent behaviour to her huſband and friends, rather to be lamented than wondered at. How ſweet are the rewards of virtue! how conſoling to the oppreſſed and afflicting ſpirit, that thoſe evils which wound us, are not the conſequence of vice, nor a neglect of our principal duties. Oh! my dear, when you can look back to the years of childhood, and to thoſe of maturity, without ſelf-reproach; when your conduct has been ſuch, as

all

all the worthy muſt approve, how are your feelings to be envied, and where is the ſorrow that can inflict equal wounds on you, to what that wretch Thurkill muſt feel, in her gaieſt and moſt diſſipated hours! doubt not, my dear Mrs. Menville, of your being the peculiar care of Providence, who in its own good time, will reſtore you to happineſs. That the day may not be far diſtant, prays moſt ſincerely

Your affectionate and obliged friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

All our family, Miſs Neville and Mr. Martin, tender their beſt reſpects.

END OF VOL. III.

WOMAN

AS SHE

SHOULD BE.

LETTER I.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I HAVE your letter, my dear proud friend; how much am I deceived in you; I thought you meek, complaiſant, and obliging; no! you reſiſt the entreaties of your Charlotte; "you are rich," doubtleſs, "very rich," and ſuperior to the power or will to oblige thoſe who love you; well, purſue, obſerve, thoſe faſtidious notions which mortify your friends, and by mortifying *yourſelf*, gratify your enemies. You muſt do as you pleaſe, and I muſt ſubmit to your arbitrary determination. I lay down my pen, my mind is diſturbed, and I cannot at preſent go on. My dear Mrs. Menville, forgive me, I believe I am too petulant, I am a ſpoiled child, and cannot

bear to be croſſed in my wiſhes, but your ſuperior wiſdom ſhall controul my impatience; you promiſe, when you want aſſiſtance, you will apply to me; I *depend* on *that promiſe*; I think worlds would not bribe you to break your word when once given, on that I rely.

I have much to tell you, I am the friend, the confidant of Donna Antonia; I am grieved for her; "What is more terrible than a hopeleſs love?" *her's* is ſuch for Harley—ſhe no longer affects to miſlead me, ſhe owns her partiality, though confident it never can be returned.

"I eſteem, I love him," ſaid ſhe, "why ſhould I ſeek to hide from others, what I cannot conceal from myſelf? my dear lady, pity me; the completion of our own wiſhes is often our ſevereſt puniſhment; I was the firſt to deſire, to entreat, you would ſtay longer at Spa, I now find I did wrong; every day adds ſtrength to my pre-poſſeſſion. I call to mind what you told me, his attachment to another lady, but that lady is married, his attachment cannot continue now; he is an Heretic, *ſhould* he feel a regard for me, my father, my friends never will conſent to ſuch an union, and without it, portionleſs and reprobated, I have too much pride ever to be his. Dear madam, inſtruct me, tell me what I muſt do to conquer this partiality, to regain tranquillity, and re-obtain the love of my ſiſter, and my own eſteem?"

I embraced the lovely girl, I applauded her ſentiments, her heroiſm; I thought it behoved me to ſpeak plainly, without mentioning names I related to her your whole ſtory, and developed

Captain

Captain Harley's ſentiments. She heard me with ſtrict attention. When I ſtopped,

"Dear Lady Wentworth, how good you are, what an angel is your friend, what a leſſon have you taught me? ſhe ſacrificed her inclinations to oblige her family; ſhall the dutiful Antonia do leſs? no, I will ſubdue my affection, I will no longer entertain ſentiments repugnant to the wiſhes of my father; if I cannot immediately marry the man of his choice, I will no longer harden my mind againſt him; I will judge him fairly, I will try to do juſtice to his merits, and if poſſible, overcome the reluctance I feel to oblige my family. Yet the aſſaſſination, can that be pardonable? Can the mind be good where ſuch evil deſigns predominate? dear Lady Wentworth, pity me, pray for me, indeed I will try to emulate your angelic friend."

I was greatly affected; I aſſured her I eſteemed her infinitely; that ſhe was one of the firſt of women, and would, I was confident, ſucceed in her endeavours, to be a pattern to her ſex. I ſaw ſhe was gratified by my praiſes, and I am ſure, from the natural greatneſs and generoſity of mind ſhe poſſeſſes, will get the better of a paſſion which meets no return.

I am uneaſy about Mrs. Neville, ſhe ſubmitted to the loſs of her huſband, after the firſt violent emotions of grief were ſubſided, with as much fortitude as we could well expect; ſhe even began to be cheerful, but within theſe laſt three weeks, ſhe is grown melancholy, reſerved, pale and unhappy. I have ſpoken to her on the ſubject, I can obtain no information, ſhe evades my queſtions, and aſks in return,

"Has ſhe not cauſe to be unhappy; about to return to a country, without friends or connexions, where ſhe was once bleſt with ſo many?"

"Perhaps then, Mrs. Neville, you would prefer living abroad?"

"What, madam, when Captain Harley and you are going to England? no, without your ſociety I muſt be wretched indeed!"

I ſaid no more, but I am perſuaded ſome ſecret grief preys upon her mind, and I ſincerely pity her. She is cold and diſtant to the Oſſuana family, and generally declines their invitations; Mr. Sackville appears to be her greateſt favourite, and he is evidently partial to *her*; being unhappy, is a ſufficient claim upon his regard.

I am delighted with, though grieved for, your amiable St. Bernard, her fate is a ſevere one, to be the victim of avarice and falſe conjectures, but ſhe has a dignity of mind, and a reſignation, which will, I doubt not, make her eaſy, though not happy in her profeſſion; tell her I love her for her kindneſs to my friend. Was I not thoroughly acquainted with the ſtrength of your principles, I ſhould think you in danger of being converted, but I can judge candidly of the Catholic faith, as well as yourſelf; I ſee and know many very amiable perſons of that perſuaſion, and have no doubt but local ſituations form our principles of religion; for born in France or Spain, we had aſſuredly been Catholics. The Count's family, drawing their firſt breath, and receiving their education in England, would in all probability have been Proteſtants. The good and pious of all different perſuaſions, I love and admire, and deſpiſe the narrow contracted heart,

which

which admits of no worth, no ſalvation, out of their own church. Antonia is the moſt charitable Catholic I have ever met with; ſhe admires merit wherever ſhe meets with it, without conſidering what their religion may be: not ſo Iſabella, ſhe is a bigot, haughty, reſerved, and looks with a contemptuous pity on heretics; as unhappy beings, on the verge of deſtruction through their own folly.

I am really grown wonderous fond of Spa, we have moſt agreeable parties; the Ducheſs of C——— engages every heart, by her affability and ſweetneſs; how engaging is that winning condeſcenſion in perſons of high rank; they ought indeed to be *above* being proud; they may condeſcend to beſtow diſtinction, they can receive none from others, but they may enjoy the love, the admiration of every body, they may obtain a reputation, worth a thouſand hours, ſacrificed to pride and an aſſumed ſuperiority over others. Here are likewiſe ſeveral foreign ladies of diſtinction, whoſe pleaſant manners and natural vivacity, greatly enliven our parties; would to heaven you were with us. The Count and his daughters are juſt come in, I muſt attend them; heaven preſerve you my dear and amiable friend, may you ſoon be reſtored to happineſs, and your friends anxious wiſhes.

Believe me ever your's,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HOW unluckily and accidentally am I thrown into freſh embarraſſments! this morning a young Engliſh lady, a penſioner, was ſitting with me, when one of the nuns came to tell her, a gentleman, a relation of her's, was at the grate, and requeſted to ſee her, having letters from her family; Miſs Southwell begged me to accompany her to the parlour; how I came to comply with her requeſt, I know not, as I had made it a point not to ſee any company; but ſo it was, I followed her, and on coming into the parlour, who ſhould I ſee at the grate but Lord Longfield. Our ſurpriſe was mutual.

"Mrs. Menville," exclaimed his Lordſhip, "this is fortunate indeed!"

"You

"You are acquainted then," ſaid Miſs Southwell, with a ſmile.

"I have the honour of knowing his Lordſhip," I replied, "we were once neighbours in the country."

"I hope my dear madam," ſaid he, a little recovered, "I hope you are well, and your ſweet little girl?"

"We are both perfectly well, and I am happy to ſee your Lordſhip in the ſame deſirable ſituation."

With a low courteſy, and before Miſs Southwell could prevent me, I haſtily quitted the parlour, exceedingly mortified, that chance ſhould have thrown me in the way of ſeeing him, for if, by any accident, Lord Longfield's viſit to this convent ſhould be known to Mr. Menville, nothing, I dare ſay, would perſuade him to believe otherwiſe, than that he was acquainted with my retirement. When Miſs Southwell returned, I was in tears.

"God bleſs me, dear madam, what is the matter; how is it that my couſin and you are both ſo ſhocked and grieved at this accidental interview?"

Unable to explain ſuch delicate circumſtances to her, as cauſed my diſtreſs, I only replied,

"That his Lordſhip having been acquainted with my huſband, and known me in happier days, his preſence, which I did not expect, had reminded me of thoſe ſituations which I could not reflect on without pain."

She looked, I thought, incredulous, and eyed me with an unfavourable and ſuſpicious air, ſpoke very little, and ſoon left me.

"Is

" Is it not very unfortunate for me, to be thus thrown in the way of a man, whom of all others I would avoid; yet unconſcious as he is of being an object of jealouſy—jealouſy! no, I retract the word, jealouſy implies ſome degree of affection; ſuſpicion is the proper epithet for Mr. Menville's ideas; not knowing then that Mr. Menville thought indifferently of him, he muſt think my behaviour very ſtrange and unpolite, yet I could not act otherwiſe. This vexatious circumſtance ſhall be a leſſon to me, not to venture near the grate again."

Madam St. Bernard has juſt been with me, ſhe ſaid, Miſs Southwell mentioned in full claſs to her dear mother, Mrs. Menville's confuſion and ſtrange behaviour, at ſeeing her couſin, and that during the little time he ſtayed, he aſked many queſtions, and deſired ſhe would pay particular attention to Mrs. Menville; in ſhort, ſaid the malicious girl,

" One would think there was a love affair between them, and very like her huſband placed her in a convent whilſt he is abroad, to prevent their ſeeing each other."

" Fye, Miſs Southwell," ſaid mother St. Paul, " you ſhould never hazard ſuch ungenerous conjectures; Mrs. Menville conducts herſelf with great propriety, and I dare anſwer for it, ſhe is perfectly free from an improper attachment to any body."

The girl put up her lip at the rebuke, and Madame St. Bernard fears ſhe will do me great prejudice in the convent.

" Yet why ſhould ſhe, I have never offended her, nor was there any thing ſo very extraordinary in my behaviour to his Lordſhip."

I was,

I was, however, ſo much affected, that my amiable friend ſhed tears of ſympathy over me, and fearful that *ſhe* too might entertain unfavourable ſuſpicions, I very frankly acquainted her with every circumſtance of my life; ſhe embraced me with the warmeſt affection.

"I was ſure I could not be deceived," ſaid ſhe, "the very firſt moment I ſaw you, that ingenuous countenance ſpoke a good heart; we may be prejudiced in favour of beauty, without doubt, but in Mrs. Menville's face, the leading character was frankneſs and ſincerity; I pride myſelf on my diſcernment. Deareſt madam, take comfort, be aſſured you will one day be rewarded for your patient obedience to a prejudiced and ill-adviſed man; you will yet be an ornament, a bright example to the world."

My dear Lady Wentworth, how ſoothing is eulogy from a friend! how does it ſtimulate a feeling mind to deſerve it, and that in compliment to the judgment of that friend, as well as for our own advantage. I will not be diſturbed at any thing this talkative girl ſays, my conduct ſhall diſapprove her malicious conjectures.

Your ſecond letter is this moment brought to me; I congratulate you on the agreeable addition to your parties, but I am entirely unacquainted with the Count and his daughters. Mrs. Colemore mentioned nothing of her correſpondence with Captain Harley, to me. Scrupulous, with reſpect to the delicacy I thought neceſſary to obſerve, after I became Mr. Menville's wife, I choſe not to hear any particulars relative to Captain Harley; yet you ſee I could not eſcape cenſure; the intercourſe between them was known, and

I was ſuppoſed to be concerned in it—I am happy, however, in being able to acquit myſelf.

From what you think of Antonia, I ſhould imagine, if the article of religion can be diſpenſed with, ſhe might prove a very deſirable wife for Captain Harley; I ſhould rejoice to hear he was married to an amiable woman, ſuch as you deſcribe that lady; pray let me hear further particulars relative to the family; I am already warmly prejudiced in favour of the eldeſt daughter; perhaps Bella may be equally eſtimable, but having more of the Spaniſh manners about her, that gravity and reſerve do not recommend her to the eſteem of the Engliſh; yet we ought to allow for local prejudices, and different modes of education, and doing that, the cheerful openneſs of Antonia's manners are more to be wondered at, than the habitual gravity of Iſabella's, which perhaps may not be tinctured by ill-nature or pride either. I ſuppoſe, when I next hear from you, it will be from London; may gentle gales ſoon waft you to your native ſhore; may your journey be productive of health, peace and pleaſure, and may your worthy friends live to rejoice in your felicity! My grateful and beſt reſpects to all.

I am ever,

my dear Lady Wentworth,

your affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I Have ſtrange news for you my dear Mrs. Menville. Two days ago your brother Anthony unexpectedly made his appearance at Sudbury; my father was exceedingly ſurpriſed.

" I am not ſorry to ſee you returned, ſir, but I muſt ſuppoſe ſomething more than common has procured us that pleaſure."

" Yes," replied your brother, with a mighty ſelf-ſufficient air, " yes, my return is ſomething ſudden to be ſure, and the cauſe of it not a little extraordinary; I am married, ſir."

" Married!" repeated my father, " what before you are of age; it is not legal, ſir."

" But I intend to make it ſo, by marrying again in England."

" But

"But pray, ſir, may I aſk who the lady is?"

"Oh! certainly; the lady's name was Madam Roland, the widow of a great banker, ſhe has twenty thouſand, ſir."

"If ſo," returned my father, "and the lady is a woman of character, you are a fortunate young man. However, I ſhould be glad to know every particular reſpecting this marriage, as I hold myſelf, in ſome degree, reſponſible for your conduct in ſo important a point."

"By all means," anſwered he, careleſsly, "here is my ſtory. You know I was at Bruſſels with my friend, he was very expenſive; I could not bear to appear in the light of an inferior, and therefore figured away likewiſe, until I got confoundedly in debt; the ſupply I had from you was nothing. I was adviſed to apply to Madam Roland, who lent out money on intereſt. I waited on her, ſhe proved generous, and I was freed from my embarraſſments, by giving her a bond for the money advanced me, payable in two months, though I could not tell how I ſhould raiſe it. Madam Roland was very agreeable, I was a frequent viſitor; I began at laſt to think ſhe was very partial to me; it ſtruck into my head, Why not try to gain the widow, and pay your debt by giving her a good huſband. I hailed the lucky thought, and watched a favourable opportunity to declare my paſſion. I was heard with kindneſs, and in a few days ſhe agreed to marry me, conditionally, that we ſhould ſet off for England directly; ſhe procured a prieſt, and I engaged to have the ceremony performed again on our arrival in England. She made over to me twenty thouſand pounds, and has about ſix more

more reſerved to herſelf, an immenſe fortune abroad: in ſhort, we were married, and fled to avoid the pouts and reproaches of her relations. We came ſafe to London laſt night, and now, ſir, I muſt beg leave to introduce my wife, and alſo requeſt you will make her legally ſo, by giving your conſent, and conforming to the laws of this country."

My father, you may be ſure, was greatly ſurpriſed, but he thought the wiſeſt way now would be to comply, he therefore ſignified, that he might bring Mrs. Oſwald down to us. He was mightily pleaſed, ſet off the ſame evening, and this morning returned with his wife. I had figured to myſelf ſome old frippery French coquette; no ſuch thing I aſſure you; ſhe is, I believe, a dozen years older than your brother, but an agreeable polite woman; ſhe ſpeaks a little Engliſh, ſufficient to be underſtood, and in ſhort, I think he is very fortunate, if appearances may be depended upon. I ſhall attend them at church to-morrow morning, to confirm their marriage; your brother ſays he ſhall ſell the reverſion of the living Mr. Menville gave him, having no inclination to devote himſelf to the church, as his eſtate and wife's fortune will enable him to live very well. This evening he aſked us after you; I eagerly told him every thing, he ſeemed affected, Mrs. Oſwald wept.

"Dear ſir," ſaid ſhe, "reſcue your good ſiſter; make ſome application to her huſband to do her juſtice."

"I will, depend upon it I will; after to-morrow, when we return to town, I will ſee my uncle on the buſineſs."

"But

"But you have no houſe in town," cried I, "had not Mrs. Oſwald better ſtay with us, 'till you can procure one?"

"I ſhould be very happy to do ſo, madam, if agreeable to Mr. Oſwald."

"By all means," he ſaid, and thanked me very politely for giving the invitation.

I aſſure you he is greatly altered; and much improved in his manners; I hope he will make a good huſband, for I like his wife exceedingly.

Juſt returned from church. They are now firmly united, and I hope will be happy. My mother thinks the lady ſhowed more love than prudence, in riſquing herſelf and fortune into the hands of ſo young a man, and of whom ſhe knew ſo little; as a woman at the full age of diſcretion, and a widow too, ſhe ſays there was a degree of levity in her conduct, certainly hardly pardonable in a perſon of thirty. However, the ladies abroad, I have been told, are not altogether ſo ſcrupulous and preciſe as the Engliſh; the young one's are a thouſand times more reſerved, but when they marry, paradoxical as it may ſeem, they marry to obtain their liberty, and ever after kick prudence and diſcretion out of doors. But I will readily abſolve Madame Roland, if ſhe has erred only in favour of Mr. Oſwald. To-morrow he goes to London, and will ſee your uncle, after which he deſigns writing to Mr. Menville, if he can obtain his addreſs. I am really much pleaſed to ſee ſuch an alteration in his diſpoſition, if it is not too ſudden to be laſting.

My dear Mrs. Menville, I delayed finiſhing my letter, until your brother's return: he has ſeen

ſeen your uncle, I will not repeat the diſcourſe of ſuch a ——; help me to a word bad enough for a wretch ſo deſpicable—he is obſtinate and unbelieving, nay, he almoſt made a convert of your brother, to his unworthy ideas; but we have obliged him to bluſh at being duped by ſuch improbable tales; he will write you ſoon. I am in love with your new ſiſter; this evening ſhe ſaid to Mr. Oſwald,

" I think, when you have taken a houſe it ought to be an aſylum for your ſiſter; let her huſband be as croſs as he pleaſes, he cannot object to his wife's reſidence with you; and I am ſure, from the character thoſe ladies give of her, I ſhould be delighted with ſuch a companion."

" I thank you, madam," I anſwered, " Mrs. Menville is deſerving your higheſt eſteem; but ſo very ſtrict are her ideas, relative to the duty and obedience of wives, that I queſtion if ſhe would accept any ſituation which was not firſt pointed out to her by her huſband, however deſirous ſhe might be to congratulate you and her brother."

" Jeſu Marie!" cried ſhe, " what a fate is her's, how good ſhe muſt be; ah! very few women would bear ſuch indignities like her."

I am of her opinion, and pray moſt devoutly I may never experience trials like your's, for I know I am not aqual to them. I ſhall ſend this off immediately, that you may be prepared for Anthony's letter; I really think all Mr. Menville has a right to expect, is a compliment from you; that you are going to reſide with your brother and his wife, he *cannot*, with any conſiſtency, make the leaſt objection to it: and ſurely, you will

will be much happier with them, than you can be in the ſolitary life you now ſupport in a convent, or even in your favorite cottage. Adieu, my deareſt friend, my heart beats in the hope of ſoon embracing you, and leading you to enjoy a brother and ſiſter's love.

Ever affectionately your's,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

IF you do not think me good, grateful and obliging, my dear friend, you do not give me the juſtice I deſerve; this is a ſecond volunteer; I thank you however for your laſt letter, for your communications, &c. to be ſure meeting Lord Longfield was an untoward circumſtance, but can be of no conſequence, as perhaps the ſequel of my letter may convince you, for he is now with us; I am ſure, therefore, his viſit was not repeated, and an accidental interview for a moment, never can, by any repreſentation, do you an injury. Pray, therefore, diveſt yourſelf of all fears on that head. Lord Longfield came through Paris; curioſity, *nothing more*, led him to enquire about Mr. Menville and his companion. They had left Paris, and were at Lyons. He came on, by

by eaſy journies, to Spa, and finding where we reſided, and being ſlightly, very ſlightly known to Sir Charles, one morning left a card. I ſcreamed for joy when I ſaw the name, ſo dear is every one to me that has enjoyed the happineſs of your acquaintance. Sir Charles returned the viſit in the morning, and brought him back to dinner. I had half a mind to jump into his arms, but a little ſenſe of decorum withheld me, and I was contented to welcome him with pleaſure and ſincerity. He is a moſt amiable man, prejudiced as I was in his favour, you really have not done him juſtice. In the evening I had a route, and conſequently Sir Charles introduced him to every one he thought deſerving his acquaintance. I took upon me to requeſt permiſſion of the Count and his daughters, to honour his Lordſhip with their friendſhip, which was accorded with great graciouſneſs. I aſked my Lord what he thought of the ladies,

"Both are beautiful women," anſwered he, "but they create different ideas; the eldeſt *entreats* you to admire her, with an expreſſion that cannot be reſiſted; the other ſiſter *demands* your admiration, with a haughtineſs you dare not withſtand, at the ſame time that you feel an inclination to reſiſt ſuch arbitrary commands. In ſhort, the eldeſt you may love, the younger one you may reſpect and admire at a diſtance."

"You have exactly defined my ſentiments of the two ſiſters," ſaid Sir Charles, "but I am ſo truly an Engliſhman, and ſo fond of my own country-women, that I cannot ſee any perfection but in them; there may be others more beautiful, but where is the grace, the modeſt dignity, the conſcious

conſcious ſenſe of worth and honour to be found, equal to what you meet with in an Engliſh lady?"

"Thank ye, my Lord," ſaid I, "and you too, Sir Charles, I aſſure you I am very proud of the diſtinction you make in favour of my country-women, but don't let a blind partiality hood-wink your better judgment; I have very ſeldom ſeen equal claims for admiration to what theſe lovely ſiſters poſſeſs."

"I think, madam," ſaid his Lordſhip, bowing, "I think *you have* ſeen ſuperiour claims; claims which are ſtamped into excellence, by ſupporting with dignity different ſituations in life, whether of proſperity or adverſity."

"I ſtand corrected, my Lord, but I ſaid I had "*ſeldom* ſeen," and one only exception may be included, and certainly was meant to be ſo, under that expreſſion."

"I beg *your* pardon, madam, for the obſervation, and ought to have done you more juſtice than to have made it."

So our converſation ended: my Lord is received into our coterie, and we all think him a very deſirable acquiſition.

I do not, my dear friend, think it poſſible that trifling girl can do you any prejudice; truth ſpeaks for itſelf, and conduct ſo blameleſs as your's, may defy ſlander, and all her envenomed train. You did right to make St. Bernard your confidante; a heart like her's is a fit repoſitory for the ſecrets of a friend, and without betraying you, ſhe may counteract the malice of others.

I have now a ſecret to diſcloſe, which will doubtleſs ſurpriſe you; Mrs. Neville is very far gone

gone in a paſſion for Captain Harley; gratitude gradually led the way to her heart whilſt her huſband lived; ſhe looked up to him only as the preſerver of her family; when he was taken from her, ſhe conſidered Harley as a ſuperior being, as a father to her children, as her benefactor and friend. Alas! my dear, in a ſuſceptible heart, how eaſy the tranſition from gratitude to love, the object ſo engaging! I am convinced her heart was gone before ſhe ever ſuſpected it; and when Antonia came, when the object of her ſecret affections paid attention to that lady, ſhe firſt diſcovered the nature of that preference ſhe imputed to gratitude alone; hence aroſe her reſerve and melancholy, which gave me ſo much concern; to the ſame cauſe it was that ſhe repelled all the overtures which the Spaniſh ladies made to her. Accident has diſcovered the whole ſecret to me, ſince which ſhe has been unreſerved, but blames and execrates herſelf for an involuntary weakneſs which ſhe is determined to overcome.

"Not for ten thouſand worlds," ſaid ſhe, "would I have Captain Harley ſuſpect the nature of my attachment to him, he would hate and deſpiſe me; how lightly muſt he think of a woman, who has buried the huſband ſhe doated on, little more than three months ſince, and ſo ſoon to think of another; it cannot, it ſhall not be, it is tender gratitude alone, I never will indulge another ſentiment."

I told her ſhe did herſelf juſtice, and was alarmed without any cauſe; that ſtrong gratitude, in delicate minds, nearly reſembled love; her's was nothing more, I was well convinced. This aſſurance of mine gave her pleaſure, and I am perſuaded

ſuaded will ſtrengthen her mind to ſubdue her affection. Antonia is really a heroine; whatever her feelings may be, ſhe ſtruggles with them, and behaves with an eaſe and propriety that is aſtoniſhing to me, who know her heart. I can ſee plainly, from the efforts of this charming young woman, that love may be conquered by reaſon and diſcretion; and for that fooliſh romantic paſſion which very young people are apt to make ſo formidable, and ſo impoſſible to be ſubdued, it exiſts more in their brain, than in the heart, and is cheriſhed by weakneſs and inexperience, when ſenſe and fortitude would be ſuperior to indulging paſſions their judgment muſt condemn. Antonia frequently ſpeaks of you, with affection and admiration; ſhe wiſhes her father could be prevailed upon to viſit England; I intend ſounding the Count upon the ſubject, but my hopes are ſmall, as I know he looks forward to his daughter's union with the Duke de Solis, who, diveſted of that national jealouſy and quick reſentment, natural to a Spaniard, every one agrees is a very worthy man, and adores his fair miſtreſs.

"Do you know that I think Mr. Sackville is more than half in love with Mrs. Neville; he is much older, to be ſure, yet he is a very agreeable and worthy man, and I wiſh ſuch a union, could take place with all my heart. I am interrupted."

Ah! my dear, ſuch a ſcene? what a Godlike being that Harley is, compaſſionate and beneficent to all. The two Spaniſh ladies, Lord Longfield, Harley and myſelf, ſallied forth to take a walk; we left the reſt of our party at cards. Sauntering by the waterſide, an elderly woman, with

with a little girl, came towards us, and was paſſing by us, when accidentally raiſing her eyes, ſhe ſaw Harley, down ſhe dropped on her knees,

" May God Almighty ever bleſs and preſerve you, worthy ſir, oh! you have made my poor heart ſing with joy, you have ſaved my huſband and children!"

Harley bid her riſe, and was for haſtening her away.

" No, no," cried I, " you ſhall not, ſir, hide your talents in a napkin."

" Pray, good woman, what has this gentleman done for you?"

" Oh! heaven bleſs him," ſaid ſhe.

" Pray, Lady Wentworth, go on," ſaid Harley, " you already attract obſervation."

" Well then," returned I, " you ſhall be obeyed, but I will not have my curioſity balked; here, Peter, ſtep back, ſhew this woman our houſe, bid her call on me two hours hence, ſhe will not repent it."

The woman took leave with a thouſand bleſſings, whilſt Harley looked as confuſed as if we had detected him in a crime.

" Upon my word, Lady Wentworth, you have a wonderful deal of curioſity about trifles; what can you ſuppoſe there is worth knowing in the account this poor woman can give?"

" No matter, I ſhall find out ſome of your amours, perhaps."

He ſmiled, and the ſubject dropped.

I was ſcarcely got home, before the woman made her appearance; ſhe was evidently frightened, but I bade her take courage, and deſired

ſhe

ſhe would tell me every thing about herſelf and family.

And pleaſe your ladyſhip, madam, my huſband was a baker, and we got very good buſineſs, and did very well; I had children faſt to be ſure, but what of that, they all grew up, five of them, four boys and a girl. Several years we lived happy; one boy ſerved with his father, the other three went into the army; alack, my lady, they were killed in leſs than two years; it went ſorely to our hearts, and I thought I muſt have died too, but God ſpared me, and well he did; and ſo, madam, my girl married a man in good buſineſs, who is ſettled at Liſle; my ſon, who helped his father, married, a very honeſt, ſober young woman; they lived with us, ſhe had three children, in bringing a fourth into the world, ſhe died; my ſon, who was never very ſtrong, took it ſo to heart, that in leſs than three months he died too; ſo then we were left alone, God help us, with four ſmall children; my poor huſband grew deſponding, as I may ſay; he had always the rheumatics, he could not work hard; we took a journeyman, he cheated us cruelly, and ſo from one think to the other, we were ruined. A man to whom we owed money for flour, got hold of my poor huſband, ill as he was, to take him to priſon. I and the poor children followed, crying our eyes out, when God ſent that bleſſed gentleman, that was with your ladyſhip. He aſked what was the matter, the neighbours told him—ſure as you are alive, my lady, he took us all into a houſe, ſent for money, paid the debt, and ſent us home with five Engliſh guineas in our pockets. Next day he called upon us, and he

he has agreed with a great banker here, to pay us twenty pounds a year; he has taken the eldeſt boy, ſix years old, and put him to ſchool, and ſays he will do ſomething for all of them. God bleſs him, he is an angel to be ſure, and every time I ſee him, methinks I could fall down and worſhip him."

I was greatly affected with the poor woman's ſtory, I gave her ſomething, deſired her to bring the eldeſt girl, who was four years old, and I would provide for her.

The poor creature went away in tears, bleſſing God, the good gentleman, and my ladyſhip.

"Don't you think Harley is a glorious fellow?" I mentioned the ſtory to Mr. Sackville; he has undertaken to provide for the two younger children, allowing the grand-mother twenty pounds a year for them, and when they are fit to go to ſchool, will empower ſome perſon here to take care of them. Thus, through Harley's means, the family will be made comfortable, who muſt otherwiſe have periſhed with indigence in a priſon. Poor Mrs. Neville wept aloud, and was obliged to leave the room, when informed of theſe particulars; this morning ſhe ſaid,

"For heaven's ſake, my dear Lady Wentworth, tell me no more of Captain Harley's merits, I cannot bear to hear them, do not think me ungrateful, but every good action of his, is a dagger to my heart; Oh that I was at Sudbury, or any where from him."

Poor woman; for her ſake I ſhall not be ſorry when we are ſeparated. I ſhall write you one letter

letter more before we leave Spa; I impatiently expect to hear further from you—write conſtantly, my beloved friend, if you wiſh me to be happy.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER V.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MY dear Mrs. Colemore, I am ſent for expreſs to Lyons, by Mr. Menville, who is dangerouſly ill. I fly to obey the ſummons; God grant I may find him alive and better. Tell my brother, tell his lady, I congratulate them with my whole heart; I hope to demand, and deſerve their love. Write not 'till you hear from me. Heaven bleſs you, and all you value.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER VI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I Am juſt ſetting off for Lyons, my dear Lady Wentworth; an expreſs I have received from Mr. Menville, who lies dangerouſly ill, will carry me there with the utmoſt expedition. Oh! if he does but live, I may yet be happy! I go alone, the good St. Bernard will take care of my child, and I leave Patty to attend it. The Abbeſs received a letter, as well as myſelf, from my *huſband's brother*, ſhe ſaid. I ſhall write the moment I have leiſure. Adieu, my beloved Charlotte, pray for me, but write not 'till you hear from, or of me; your letters, if any already written, will be ſent after me to Lyons. Fare-

well, deareſt friend of my heart, heaven preſerve you and all your family.

I am ever,

Your's ſincerely,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I Have been here two days, my dear lady; Mr. Menville is alive, and that is all I can ſay. This is the firſt hour I have quitted him ſince my arrival. My heart, my ſpirits are almoſt broken; good God, what ſcenes have I gone through? oh! my dear friend, what horror is equal to a death-bed, where the mind is diſturbed. I have left him now in a ſweet ſleep; it may prove ſalutary to him, but the phyſicians give me no hopes. I will try, if poſſible, to deſcribe, to relate to you what has paſſed ſince I wrote laſt. The man who brought the expreſs, was ordered to accompany me to Lyons; we flew, I may ſay, through the country, for I would not ſtop on the road, but to change horſes. When we came to the houſe, my ſtrength and ſpirits failed me,

me, and whilſt the man went up to prepare Mr. Menville for my preſence, a woman ſervant brought me ſome refreſhment; but judge of my ſurpriſe, when after taking a little wine and water, and by the help of ſalts, preſerved from fainting, I was waiting for a ſummons to attend my huſband, when the door opened, and Mr. Martin appeared; I really ſcreamed.

Mr. Martin ſaid, "I doubt not, madam, but my preſence muſt greatly ſurpriſe you; another time, and I will account for it; at preſent Mr. Menville wiſhes to ſee you."

I gave him my hand without ſpeaking, and was conducted to the room; he led me to a chair by the ſide of the bed;

"Mrs. Menville," ſaid he, and immediately left the room in great emotion.

I undrew the curtain; what an object preſented itſelf; my huſband apparently in the arms of death; tears running down his cheeks; he held out his hand, but was unable to ſpeak.

I threw myſelf on my knees, kiſſed his hand, and wept bitterly.

"For me," ſaid he, feebly, "*do* you, *can* you, weep for me! oh, my dear Emily, I have been a villain."—He could ſay no more.

Again I kiſſed his hand, "Let all that is paſt be forgotten; you call me *your dear Emily*, ſhe is your tender, your affectionate wife; look up, my deareſt huſband, with hope and comfort, you will get well, and we ſhall both be happy."

"Angel," cried he, preſſing my hand, "what a blind, infatuated wretch have I been; what a ſerpent have I held to my boſom; how cruelly have I treated you?"

"Not

"Not one word on former occurrences, my dear Mr. Menville, compoſe your mind, I am happy, more happy in your reſtored affection, than if I had never forfeited it."

"Forgive me, forgive me," repeated he, "I ſee, I feel I have been a monſter."

Again his eyes overflowed; that, and the emotions I felt before, overcame me quite, and with a faint groan, I fell to the ground. The nurſe and Mr. Martin, who were within hearing, run into the room, and thought *him* dead, and *me* dying. I was ſoon recovered, but it was ſome time before my huſband ſhewed returning life, and then he was ſo weak, ſo ill, as to be incapable of talking. I remained with him all night; now and then he ſpoke a few words faintly, bleſſing me, but they were ſcarcely articulate. Yeſterday he was a little better, but I would not permit him to talk, and in this ſtate he continued laſt night, without any reſt, but perfectly in his ſenſes. About half an hour ago he dropped aſleep; I juſt left him to change my clothes, have written thus far, and now return to my melancholy ſeat.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

MR. MARTIN IN CONTINUATION.

I Take up the pen to addreſs you, madam, by the command of Mrs. Menville, who is at preſent incapable of the employment. Mr. Menville is no more! be his errors forgotten, and may he be happy; he expired bleſſing his wife, and all who had been her friends; ſenſible to the laſt moment, and truly repentant. Poor lady! ſhe was very unequal to ſcenes like theſe; perſecution ſhe could bear with firmneſs, but the death of a huſband, conſcious of the unmerited ill-treatment he had given her, his tenderneſs, his entreaties for pardon, and for her prayers, theſe things ſhe could not ſupport. After he had cloſed his eyes for ever, ſhe fainted ſeveral times; the ſervants placed her in bed, and then ſhe ſaid,

" Pray

"Pray leave me a few hours to myſelf—Mr. Martin, be ſo good to write Lady Wentworth?"

I retired to obey her commands, and ſhall inform you of every circumſtance I know, previous to Mrs. Menville's being ſent for.

I had the honour of ſpending a week ſome time ago, with Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, after my return from France; during that viſit, by accident I heard the name of the convent Mrs. Menville reſided at, which gave me ſome pleaſure. The day before I left Sudbury, I received a letter from my friend Chambers, who reſides at Paris, giving me a piece of news he thought would gratify my reſentment and hatred of Mr. Menville, and which account he had from the banker who managed that gentleman's affairs. Mr. Menville and Mrs. Thurkill had retired to Lyons, where an Italian nobleman payed great attention to the lady which Mr. Menville did not approve of, and conſequently there was perpetual janglings and quarrels between them, which diſpleaſed both. It happened, that from taking a violent cold, that gentleman had a raſh fever, which it was apprehended would fall upon his lungs; and that, during the time his fever was at the higheſt, Mrs. Thurkill had left him, and quitted Lyons with the nobleman, who was going to Venice, taking with her all the jewels he had given her, alſo all the money, which it ſeems was always confided to her care. The man ſervant applied to a banker, mentioned his maſter's ſituation, and the banker's name who had his money in Paris: in conſequence of which, ſome money was advanced for preſent ſupport, and a letter written to Paris. My friend Chambers

happened to be with the banker when it arrived, and immediately diſpatched the intelligence to me. I ſet off directly, poſt for Lyons; when I arrived, the ſervant was exceedingly glad to ſee me, his maſter was very ill, and vexed himſelf at Mrs. Thurkill's deſertion of him, he ſaid very much.

"Indeed," added he, "my maſter takes it ſadly to heart, more than he ought, for ſhe is a vile woman, and I can prove it."

From what he ſaid further, I underſtood he had ſhared the lady's favours with his ſuperior, and I believe was not pleaſed at her new intrigue. Having ſent up my name, poor Menville was rejoiced to ſee me. I ſaw he was in a declining ſtate, and thought it a fit opportunity to ſpeak of Mrs. Menville. I confeſſed all my former evil intentions, relative to that lady, her conduct, and my ſincere repentance; my journey to Cornwall, her rejection of my ſervices; I then mentioned the whole of her behaviour to Lord Longfield; the ſtrictneſs of her principles, her regard for him, and ſubmiſſion to his commands; in ſhort, I endeavoured to do that charming woman the juſtice ſhe deſerved, in every point which had come within my knowledge. He ſeemed to devour every word I ſaid, and when I ſtopt, like one awakening from a deep ſleep, he gave a heavy ſigh.

"If Mrs. Menville is, as you repreſent her, from your candid confeſſion of your own behaviour to her, I can have no reaſon to doubt it; tell me, Martin, what am I, who have deſerted, neglected and confined her from her friends and ſociety, and for whom? one of the moſt abandoned

doned of women—oh! Emily, my wife, my child, what have I not to anſwer for? but I ſhall never ſee them more, my death will ſoon give freedom to both."

Finding him thus ſenſible of his errors, I ventured to hint, that if he was to ſend for Mrs. Menville, I was perſuaded ſhe would inſtantly come to him, and her care might reſtore his health.

"No," ſaid he, "that can never be; but will ſhe come, think you; will ſhe ſpeak peace and pardon to the man who has ſo cruelly injured her?"

"I told him I would ſtake my life upon it."

"Send then, by all means ſend; let me ſee her before I die, that I may obtain her forgiveneſs, which I do not deſerve."

I inſtantly diſpatched a meſſenger, whoſe errand ſucceeded as I expected. Mr. Menville confeſſed to me, that his paſſion for his wife before he married her, was very violent, and not a little increaſed, by his deſire to triumph over Harley, to whom he had conceived a great averſion: after he ſucceeded, and ſhe became his wife, he was ſenſible ſhe was too good for him, as he could not be conſtant to one object. Miſs Shepherd threw herſelf in his way; her lively playful ſpirit pleaſed him; ſhe was not cruel and apprehenſive of conſequences, it was thought beſt ſhe ſhould marry: Thurkill liked her, and he perſuaded him to take her with ten thouſand pounds; he caught at the bait, they were married, but the amour was ſtill carried on, 'till ſecurity made them careleſs, and the conſequence ſoon became public. He further ſaid, that his

motives

motives for bringing Mrs. Thurkill to his houſe, were theſe; he thought Mrs. M——'s appearance with her, would ſilence the cenſures of the world, and invalidate Thurkill's teſtimony; but finding her fixed in her determination to reſiſt ſuch an inſult, that woman at length perſuaded him to get rid of his wife, and knowing how much he injured her, it was painful to him to have her in the houſe; yet he thought the world would reflect upon him if he ſent her away. Mrs. Thurkill finding him irreſolute, then aſſured him of a correſpondence being carried on, through Mrs. Colemore, between Captain Harley and his wife; alſo, that ſhe gave great encouragement to Lord Longfield; poſſeſſed of this intelligence, he obſerved no meaſures, Mrs. Menville was ſent off, and he devoted himſelf openly to the vile woman, who impoſed upon his ſenſes. The great derangement of his circumſtances, in conſequence of gambling, and the extravagancies of his miſtreſs, ſuggeſted to him the neceſſity of ſelling his eſtates, and retiring abroad, to avoid the damages, which he expected would fall heavy; this propoſal met her approbation, and was ſoon executed. A ſtrict watch was kept on Mrs. Menville, and her being ſettled ſo near Lord Longfield, gave grounds for the injurious opinion he had been led to form of her. To mortify her, therefore, ſhe was ordered to France, but he believes now, he ſaid, Mrs. Thurkill hoped to drive her to ſome deſperate ſtep, and was diſappointed at her obedience. He owned, that her compliance with his orders, and her anſwers to ſome of his letters, gave him now and then ſome doubts and compunction, but he did

did not wiſh to be undeceived. The tour to Lyons, the infamous conduct of Mrs. Thurkill, had opened his eyes to her deceit, and he was now thoroughly convinced, he had groſely injured his wife, and if ſhe would condeſcend to viſit him, which he had no right to expect, after the ill-treatment ſhe had received, it would afford him great conſolation to obtain her forgiveneſs before he expired."

It was at ſeveral different periods, madam, that Mr. Menville made me this relation, and he continued exceedingly agitated, until he heard of her arrival; indeed, I was greatly apprehenſive he would not live to ſee her. Mrs. Menville told me ſhe had written to you an account of their meeting. She looked like an angel of peace come to bleſs mankind; the ſweet ſenſibility of her countenance; her tone of voice, all was calculated to ſink deep into the ſoul, and ſpeak comfort to the wretched. Poor Menville was quite ſubdued; her kindneſs wounded him more than reproach could have done, and I ſaw a viſible change drawing on. Nature exhauſted, fell into a temporary calm ſleep; his wife left him for the firſt time, for an hour; ſhe returned before he awoke; when he began to move, ſhe hung over him; he drew her hand to his lips.

"Beſt of women, of wives, forgive me, hate not my memory, live and be happy. May the Almighty bleſs you, and my child; bleſs all your friends—I am going, heaven have mercy."

He ſpoke a few words more, inwardly, and in a few minutes expired. I aſſiſted in conveying the dear lady to her apartment, and have executed

cuted her commands, in writing to her dear Lady Wentworth. Depend upon every attention and care that a brother, or the ſincereſt friend can poſſibly pay to merit like her's, and believe me with great reſpect, madam,

Your devoted and obedient ſervant,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MR. Martin tells me, my dear friend, that he wrote a few lines to Mr. Colemore, you are therefore no ſtranger to my melancholy ſituation. Ah! how unfortunate I am, no ſooner was my huſband convinced of my innocence, than he was taken from me—alas! how many painful days have I experienced, from the ſuſpicions Mr. Menville had been led to entertain of my conduct? how ardently; with what confidence have I looked forward to a certainty of being reſtored to his affection, when that influence which overruled me ſhould be no more. How vain my expectations! how little to be depended upon the proſpect of human felicity! yet my dear Mrs. Colemore, I rejoice that I had the happineſs of being with my huſband when he drew his laſt breath; had he died without being reconciled, without

without being convinced of my truth and innocence, I ſhould have been unhappy for life. Mr. Martin's conduct is ſuch as entitles him to my higheſt eſteem and gratitude; he has engaged in the neceſſary melancholy buſineſs, with the attention of a friend. Laſt week the remains of my dear huſband was ſent off to Sudbury, to be interred there, at his own requeſt; his old and faithful ſervant attends, and I hope Doctor Ellis will receive the preparative letter in time. I cannot expreſs to you what I have gone through theſe laſt ten days; the ſhock I ſuffered from the expreſs, the melancholy cataſtrophe, the repentance and affection of Mr. Menville, all together depreſſed my mind and ſpirits beyond deſcription; perhaps it may be believed, as he was not the firſt choice of my heart, and his ſubſequent conduct could not be ſuppoſed to conciliate my affections, my grief cannot be of that violent nature, which in other circumſtances I might have felt; but my dear Mrs. Colemore, a mind of ſenſibility muſt keenly feel a ſituation like mine; for many months a prey to grief, borne down by reproach, and diſgraced by unjuſt ſuſpicions, I looked forward with hope and expectation, that a time might come, when I ſhould be reſtored to a huſband's love, and my character juſtified to the world; now, I have recovered the one only in the hour of death, and 'tis to my friends alone that I can appear clear from reproach. Indeed, indeed my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am very unhappy. To-morrow I ſhall return to the convent, and embrace my dear fatherleſs Emily; I have neither ſpirits nor ſtrength to travel ſo faſt as when I came here, though anxious to ſee my child. I forgot

forgot to tell you Mr. Menville made a will, previous to ſeeing me, in which he has given me all his remaining fortune, and left his child ſolely in my power; I will deſerve the truſt he has nobly conferred upon me; 'tis a proof of his confidence and good opinion which I ſhall be emulous to merit. I have written to Mr. Watſon, to know if the cottage is diſpoſed of, if it is, I muſt look out for a ſimilar ſituation, for never more will I mix with the gay world. In the ſociety of a few choſen friends I ſhall look for that happineſs I have hitherto ſought for in vain. Adieu my dear Mrs. Colemore.

I am ever, and ſincerely your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER X.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

AGAIN I am returned to the convent, and to my dear child, who, thank heaven, is in perfect health; I was obliged to acknowledge it was to my huſband I was ſent for, and my ſable habit being different from what I had worne, announced to them the melancholy event. I ſhall ſtay here until I have an anſwer from Mr. Watſon; I wiſh I may be fortunate enough to regain my ſweet cottage, for as to living with my brother and his lady, I cannot think of it; they are gay, and lively; I have no longer any taſte for amuſements or company, I wiſh to live to my own heart, and as becomes my ſituation, which I think more delicate than any other; my child will engroſs

groſs a large portion of my time, books, work and muſic, with now and then an agreeable neighbour, will fill up the intervals: added to which, will be the delightful employment of writing to my friends. Mr. Martin was ſo kind as to attend me to the convent; his behaviour has been truly friendly, and I think myſelf much obliged to him; happy for him that he has ſeen his errors ſo early in life, before ſickneſs and misfortunes have laid their heavy hand upon him. I hope the ſcenes he has lately been a witneſs to, will confirm his good purpoſes, and prevent any inclination for old habits to reſume their former dominion over him.

My deareſt Lady Wentworth, I have this moment received your laſt letter, the contents have ſurpriſed me, I ſhall make no comments however. I am charmed with the character of Antonia; I wiſh moſt ſincerely, Captain Harley or Lord Longfield may bring ſuch a prize to England. The difference in religious principles, with liberal and well informed minds, can ſcarcely be an objection, unleſs the Count ſhould be more contracted in his ideas; yet, if Antonia *can* conform to her father's wiſhes, without doing too great a violence to her own, doubtleſs ſhe will feel more ſatisfaction in the performance of a duty, than in the reflection of giving pain to her friends, by an indulgence of her own inclinations. The caſe indeed is ſo delicate, that no perſon can have a right to interfere.

I am not well, yet have no actual complaints to make; my ſpirits are depreſſed, and a general langour pervades over my whole frame. Whilſt my mind was in a continual agitation; whilſt I thought

thought myſelf injured and inſulted, I felt an indignation ariſing from conſcious innocence, which ſupported me through every thing, and the flatterer, hope, was at hand to inſpire gay viſions of returning happineſs. Alas! thoſe hopes are fled for ever. I was juſtified in the ſight of my huſband, only in his laſt moments, I have no longer the power of acquiring his eſteem, by my endeavours to reconcile him to himſelf, to make him happy, he felt remorſe with his laſt breath, nor could he bleſs me, he ſaid, without execrating himſelf! I hope I conveyed peace to his mind, I hope he died free from reproach; but oh, my friend, trivial errors in that moment, wound more than capital ones can do in the heyday of health; and the ſenſe he then entertained of his former follies, wrung his mind with inexpreſſible anguiſh. My poor child knows not the irreparable loſs ſhe has ſuſtained; it muſt be my care now, to ſupply the want of a father, by the ſtrictneſs of my attention to her;—yes, deareſt Emily, to you I devote my future days; no other care, no other engagement, ſhall ever interrupt, or ſupercede the duty I owe you; your father, if permitted to look down on thoſe below, ſhall ſee the duty, the affection I bore him, now centered in his child.

The dear, the good St. Bernard has, by her kindneſs, made herſelf ſo much beloved by the little creature, that ſhe almoſt rivals me; ſhe liſps a few words; mamma is equally given to the good nun and myſelf. But I tire you my dear Lady Wentworth, with ſuch unintereſting particulars, to *you* at leaſt unintereſting; I muſt

therefore

therefore quit my pen, until I find better ſpirits, and more pleaſing ſubjects. But in every ſituation I am always, deareſt friend,

Your faithful and affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

JOY to you, my deareſt friend. I encloſe a letter from our beloved Harry, which I hope will convey much pleaſure to *your* mind; at the ſame time I muſt tell you that you have deeply wounded *mine*, by preferring a cottage in Wales among ſtrangers, to a reſidence with your friends. Reflect upon your intended ſcheme; ſee if it is conſiſtent with what you owe to the affection of thoſe who ſubmitted, though with reluctance, to your former ſecluſion. But the reaſons you then adduced no longer ſubſiſt, therefore it is unkindneſs to them, and depriving yourſelf of the power to give pleaſure to others; it is unjuſt to both. If you love us, I need not uſe any arguments to convince you of it; but if you are determined not to oblige us; if you can reconcile it

it to your own feelings, to wound the boſom of your friends, I have done for ever on the ſubject.

Mrs. Neville's houſe is ready for her reception: her ſiſter impatiently expects her. The grateful girl ſhed tears of joy when ſhe heard of Captain Harley's generoſity to her. "What a benefactor, what a noble, generous mind! O! how I long to ſee him, to fall at his feet, and thank him for his kindneſs to me and my family!"

"Dear Mrs. Colemore," ſaid ſhe, "I hope he is ugly and deformed."

"Indeed," replied I, ſmiling, "your hopes are vain; for he is *only* one of the handſomeſt men I have ever ſeen."

"I am ſorry for it," returned ſhe, ſeriouſly; "for perfection in a man is ſo rare, that I fear gratitude may endanger one's heart; and he, you know, has none to beſtow in return."

"Being ſenſible of *that*," ſaid I, "will prove your beſt ſhield againſt his perfections."

My father is exceedingly pleaſed with the diſpoſition of Mr. Menville's will. He ſaid it was the beſt compliment, and the propereſt reparation he could make, and he thinks it right it ſhould be publickly known.

Colonel Huntley, who has your houſe, called on my father two days ago, and being informed of every thing relative to your affairs, and that the eſtate at Sudbury was part of your jointure, very politely offers to give up the leaſe, if it will be any accommodation to you; and what can you do better than reſide in your own houſe? and requeſts that you will conſider it not as the leaſt inconvenience to himſelf, as he ſhall feel happy

happy to have the power of obliging a lady for whoſe character he has the higheſt reſpect. My father promiſed me to make the offer in his name, and I have taken upon me to do it. I ſubmit it to your own judgment, and will not preſume to perſuade, whatever are my wiſhes."

Your brother Anthony ſeems mightily pleaſed with the juſtice done you, but is rather apprehenſive you will meet difficulties from your uncle, who will not be over pleaſed at being deprived from managing your buſineſs, but which ſtep your brother ſtrongly recommends, not being very fond of Mr. Seymour, I believe. Your ſiſter I like better every day: they have taken a houſe in town, until they can have poſſeſſion of their own eſtate, which will be near twelve months yet before he is of age; and I think it fortunate that they ſettle in the country.

Mrs. Oſwald is mortified that you will not accept her invitation. I told her you were a ſtrange dear creature, but that I had been ſo accuſtomed to think whatever you did was "beſt, diſcreteſt, and wiſeſt," that I dared not blame your determinations, though I was myſelf a ſufferer by them."

We have had a viſit from Martin, and thanked him moſt cordially for his attentions to you. The man ſeems to tread on air, he is ſo rejoiced at the change in your affairs, and that you can no more be perſecuted.

I forgot to tell you I have had a letter from Lady Hartwill, making very kind enquiries after your health, and requeſting to know when you think of returning to England. I wrote an anſwer, giving her what little information I had on the ſubject.

I cloſe

I close this letter, my dear Mrs. Menville, not entirely devoid of hope, but that you will accede to the ardent wishes of all your friends, and bless us with your society.

Ever your's,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER XII.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY deareſt friend, what have you not ſuffered from your journey, and the melancholy event, as ſudden as unſuſpected! I know your heart and its tender ſenſibilities: I ſhould fear much for your health, did I not know alſo that you have another duty ſtill to fulfil, that of living for your ſweet child; that conſideration, I am ſure, will have its full weight with a mind like your's, and is my greateſt conſolation at preſent, when I am ſo far from you. But I entreat you to remain at the convent until we call for you. My objections to return through France are now removed, and I never will forgive you, if you deprive us of the pleaſure I promiſe myſelf of returning with you to England. Within a week after you receive this letter, you may expect us.

Take

Take comfort, my dear Mrs. Menville; ſuffer not your ſpirits to be depreſſed; no one knows what is true philoſophy better than yourſelf, or can ſubmit to the diſpenſations of Providence with more reſignation. You have been called upon to ſevere trials; your fortitude has been equal to them, by a melancholy cataſtrophe you could neither foreſee nor prevent: you have been juſtified where you wiſhed to be ſo; you have the nobleſt teſtimony in your favour a dying man could give; and you can in the purity of your heart triumph over your enemies, if any ſuch exiſt. With all theſe cauſes for eaſe and peace I never can excuſe *you*, of all women, if you ſuffer your courage to be ſubdued. Let me find you reſigned and cheerful; let me embrace the deareſt friend of my heart, and exultingly ſay, "Her troubles are at an end;" not, perhaps, exactly as you could have wiſhed, but in the way Providence thought beſt, and therefore to be ſubmitted to without repining.

The Count and his beautiful daughters quit Spa on the ſame day with us; we ſhall travel part of the way together, and indeed are equally loth to part. I ventured to propoſe a tour to England. The Count anſwered, "I am compelled now to return into Spain; but if an event takes place, which I flatter myſelf will, I ſhall be very happy to make one of the party next ſpring."

"And I," ſaid Antonia, "ſhall particularly rejoice to accompany you."

"Nor ſhall I be backward," added Iſabella; "I never expected to have eſteemed Engliſh folks as I do the preſent party; and if many of

your country-women reſemble Lady Wentworth and her friends, they muſt be entitled to eſteem, wherever they are met with."

We bowed to this compliment of Iſabella's, which gave me not a little pleaſure, as I found of courſe ſome of her prejudices muſt have been done away.

Antonia behaves like an angel; not the leaſt partiality is viſible. She can be lively and entertaining, without that reſtraint ſhe wore when firſt ſhe came to Spa: her health, her ſpirits, are better; there is no embarraſſment in her manner; in ſhort, ſhe has, by uncommon reſolution, vanquiſhed a paſſion weak minds think invincible.

When I received Mr. Martin's letter, and communicated its contents, ſhe ſaid to me, "I pity your ſweet friend the trials ſhe has had to encounter with; but I hope they are all at an end, and that henceforth ſhe will enjoy felicity. Should we ever viſit England, one of my firſt wiſhes will be to be introduced to Mrs. Menville."

"And I, my dear Madam," anſwered your friend, "ſhall be particularly happy to be inſtrumental to ſuch an introduction."

I one day enquired of the Count and Iſabella the character of the Duke de Solis. They both aſſured me he was every way unexceptionable in fortune, perſon, and temper; that Antonia had taken a diſlike to him, no one knew why; and that the Duke had conceived a jealouſy of Captain Harley; "but," added the Count, "I am ſure there was not the leaſt foundation for it: the gentleman never treated her with any particular attention; and as to my daughter, it was impoſſible

impoſſible ſhe ſhould entertain any partiality beyond eſteem for a foreigner, and of a different religion. She has been very unhappy, but I think both her health and lively ſpirits are reſtored, and I am not without hopes that on our return I ſhall ſee her united to one of the worthieſt noblemen in Spain with her own conſent."

We have this day been ſettling the affairs of the baker's family, ſecuring their annuities, and our banker has kindly promiſed to ſee the two younger ones taken care of. I intend bringing my little Dora with me; Captain Harley does the ſame with Francis; and we enjoy the delight of being followed by the prayers and bleſſings of the family. Mr. Sackville and Captain Harley we ſhall drop at Paris; they deſign to ſtay there a fortnight. The reſt of the party will haſten on to Abbeville, where we propoſe reſting a night, for I muſt ſee the charming St. Bernard, and thank her in perſon for her kindneſs to me, in taking care of my friend; and then we hope to have ſuch an addition to our party, as will make us all completely happy.

Oh! my dear Mrs. Menville, how impatiently I long for the time to fold you in my arms, and aſſure you, neither time, place, or accident, has leſſened the love and admiration which reflects ſo much honour on myſelf, in being able to diſtinguiſh merit, and ſo happy as to be permitted to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your truly-affectionate friend,

C. WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear Mrs. Colemore, and one from Mr. Watſon, came to hand at the ſame time. My ſweet cottage is diſpoſed of, conſequently my firſt wiſh is rendered abortive. The next poſſible good, if I cannot be quite ſecluded, will be to reſide in your neighbourhood, but it muſt be retired; neither my own houſe, nor a houſe in the town, will pleaſe me. Should you hear of any decent little box about ten or a dozen miles from Sudbury, if detached from others the better, or near a ſmall village, I ſhall be much obliged to you to inform me; I will either purchaſe or rent it. Be ſo good to make my compliments to Colonel Huntley; I am very ſenſible of his polite offer, but, beſides that the houſe is too large for my plan of living, I do not chuſe

to reſide ſo near the town. I ſhall be very happy, therefore, to have the houſe in his hands, if agreeable to him, otherwiſe he may throw up the leaſe when he pleaſes.

I have this moment a letter from Lady Wentworth, which obliges me to change my plan. She inſiſts upon my accompanying her to her houſe for the preſent. She has altered her route, purpoſely to call for me, and has not left me the power of a refuſal, ſhe will ſo quickly follow the letter. I am vexed and diſconcerted, dearly as I love her, and anxious as I am to ſee her; I could well have excuſed this act of kindneſs now; but to decline going with her, when ſhe comes round through Paris purpoſely on my account, would be an act of ingratitude I could not forgive myſelf; therefore I muſt obey.

I have many obligations to Mr. Martin, too many, they pain me, becauſe I never can return them: in his own benevolence, in his wiſhes to ſerve his friends, he muſt find his reward. I am much obliged to Lady Hartwill; and when I arrive in England, ſhall certainly thank her for the honour ſhe does me.

My brother's ideas and mine coincide with reſpect to my uncle. It is my intention to take every thing out of his hands. I deſign to requeſt the favour of Sir Charles Wentworth and Mr. Colemore to be truſtees for my Emily. I will reſerve nothing but my jointure, every thing elſe I ſhall give up; and a long minority will, I hope, make her a very decent fortune.—If Mrs. Neville *ſhould* marry again, and Miſs Neville *ſhould* remain ſingle, I don't know any thing would

would give me ſo much gratification as having her to reſide with me. But of this hereafter.

As the time I ſhall ſtay with Lady Wentworth will be very ſhort, I ſtill requeſt you will look out for a neat cottage for me. It is reported here, that convents will be aboliſhed, and the nuns permitted to come out. Should ſuch an alteration take place, I have engaged the amiable St. Bernard to ſeek an aſylum with me. I ſhall ſincerely regret leaving her, for every day increaſes my eſteem, and little Emily doats on her. Miſs Southwell has apologized to me for her freedom of ſpeech.

" You could not injure me, Miſs Southwell; but I would wiſh it may be a leſſon to you in future, not to put unfavourable conſtructions on appearances or ſituations which you are not perfectly acquainted with."

She offered to read me a letter ſhe had received from Lord Longfield, but I declined it.

" Such praiſes," ſaid ſhe, " ſuch reſpectful expreſſions of eſteem and admiration, I ſcarce ever ſaw or heard of."

I did not chuſe to take any notice, nor appear to have any gratification from her communication, but to treat it merely as a matter of perfect indifference. I ſuppoſe, however, that his Lordſhip wrote in conſequence of my letter to Lady Wentworth.

I ſhall ſcarcely write you again until my arrival at Wentworth-Park, in Hertfordſhire. Could I any ways avoid it, I would not go; for in my preſent ſtate of mind, I can add no pleaſure to the ſociety of my friends.

My

My ſincereſt reſpects to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, Mr. Colemore, and Miſs Neville, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Colemore,

Your obliged and affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER XIV.

SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH

TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

MY dear Harley, we got ſafe to Abbeville this morning about eleven o'clock, and immediately Lady Wentworth and myſelf proceeded to the convent. Mrs. Menville ſoon made her appearance. I was ſhocked to ſee her; poor Charlotte burſt into a flood of tears: they neither of them could ſpeak for ſome moments. This charming woman boaſted of her fortitude and ſpirits, but ſhe has ſuffered much; ſhe is thin, pale, and languid, yet beautiful and intereſting beyond imagination. I will not repeat their converſation; I could not do them juſtice. Two affectionate hearts, with ſenſibility like their's, I have ſeldom met with; and their mutual friendſhip

ſhip does honour to both. I am proud of my wife, Harley, and therefore muſt include both in one praiſe.

We prevailed on her to go out and dine with us. She returned with Madame St. Bernard and her lovely child, the image of its mother, except the eyes, which are dark, like Mr. Menville's. The nun is indeed a charming woman. Lady Wentworth kiſſed her fingers through the grate, and thanked her a thouſand times for her kindneſs to Mrs. Menville.

We carried off the angelic widow, and introduced her to her delighted friends. Mr. and Mrs. Moleſworth adore her; Mrs. Neville was exceedingly affected: her grateful heart ſprung to her eyes; ſhe bleſt her for her kindneſs to her ſiſter, and was ſo overcome by her ſenſibility and gratitude, that ſhe was obliged to retire.

We ſhall ſtay here two days. Mrs. Menville does not feel any pleaſure in the idea of returning to England; at the ſame time ſhe is ſenſible ſhe ought not to remain in a convent. We ſhall keep her at the Park as long as we can; but ſhe is determined to retire to a cottage of her own. I hope, dear Harley, I ſhall yet ſee you and that lovely woman happy.

I ſuppoſe Lord Longfield will remain abroad ſome months. I am greatly intereſted for that nobleman: he has many virtues, and is ſingular for his attachment to his late Lady. A valuable woman, indeed, in this age of diſſipation and folly, cannot be too much honoured or regretted.

I am interrupted.—I promiſed you only *two* lines of information; and having exceeded that, you

you have no right to complain.—You will hear from me again when we arrive in England.

I am,

Dear Harley,

Sincerely your's,

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

I AM here at Wentworth-Park, my dear Mrs. Colemore, happy in the ſociety of my friends, and am commiſſioned by Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth to requeſt, to ſolicit, you and Mr. Colemore, with Miſs Neville, will add to our pleaſure, by coming to us with all poſſible expedition: they proteſt Mrs. Neville ſhall not go to Sudbury, until you come to accompany her back. Oblige us, my good friends; you cannot conceive how greatly we ſhall rejoice in ſuch an acquiſition to our happy party.

I ſhall go back to Lady Wentworth's arrival at Abbeville. I was fearful who might be in her ſuite. She delicately informed me Lord Longfield was at Spa, Mr. Sackville and Captain Harley at Paris; I could therefore make no objection to accompany them to England.

My

My dear St. Bernard ſhed floods of tears on our parting; nor was I leſs affected. Ah! how different our ſituations! *ſhe* confined within the walls of a gloomy convent, without friends or conſolation; I returning with my beloved companions to the land of liberty, where more dear friends awaited me.

"Promiſe me, deareſt Madam," ſaid I, embracing her, "give me your honour, that if the regulations talked of reſpecting convents take place, you will be the happy companion of my future days; will aſſiſt me in the care of my ſweet Emily."

"Yes," anſwered ſhe, "yes, my deareſt Lady, I will, I do promiſe you. Ah! where can I be ſo happy! With my brothers I could not reſide, even if they would receive me; and I candidly own, if liberty is offered me, I ſhall not prefer the convent: with whom then could I wiſh to live but with you! To have the education of that darling child would ſatisfy my warmeſt wiſhes; doubt not, therefore, of my acceptance with joy of your kind offer."

We embraced ſeveral times. I took leave of the Abbeſs and community with reſpect, and had their prayers for my future happineſs in the world, and eternal felicity in the life to come.

We had a ſhort and pleaſant paſſage, and, without reſting in London, proceeded on to the Park, which is twenty-five miles beyond it, an elegant houſe and an enchanting ſituation. My worthy friends ſtudy to make every body eaſy and happy; I never ſaw a picture of truer felicity than in their behaviour to each other, and to

their

their friends.—We are going a little tour round the villages; adieu for the preſent.

If you have not already ſecured for me a houſe that you could approve, ſuſpend for the preſent any further proceedings: I have ſeen a ſweet, beautiful houſe in the cottage ſtyle, that I think I ſhall like extremely. It is ſituated in a delightful retired vale, encompaſſed with woods, and a trout-ſtream, well ſupplied, running through them; two large gardens, one for the kitchen, the other fruit and flowers, with a ſmall, but charming ſhrubbery, and excellent gravel walks. There is plenty of game, which I am very fond of; and it is about three miles from a market-town, where I can be ſupplied with every neceſſary of life;—the diſtance from Wentworth-Park near nine miles. The houſe is not large, but handſome and convenient; a hall, two parlours, three handſome rooms, with two light dreſſing-cloſets, on the firſt floor, and four good chambers on the attic; good kitchens, laundry, and dairy, with three ſervant's rooms over. There is a ſmall orchard of excellent apples, and a large meadow of ſeven acres, at the back of the houſe. The whole is only fifty-ſix pounds a-year. Sir Charles calls on the proprietor to-morrow; for I ſhould like to have a long leaſe of it. Should I be fortunate enough to obtain it, there I ſhall fix my future abode; but previous to that I will viſit Sudbury; and if you comply with our wiſhes, ſhall certainly return with you.

I have written to my brother this morning: alſo to my uncle. I ſuppoſe the latter has heard from Harry. I forgot to ſend you in my laſt letter the contents of the one you ſo kindly tranſmitted

mitted to me; I was ſo hurried by Lady Wentworth's, that, although I had copied it for you, I omitted ſending it. You will let my brother ſee the letter when you have peruſed it. I ſhould hope he will not fix his reſidence at St. Helena, though it appears doubtful, I think.

Every one in this family join in love and compliments to you and your's. Haſten to us, and you will oblige all, particularly

Your ſincerely affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

MR. HENRY OSWALD TO MRS. MENVILLE.

My deareſt ſiſter,

HOWEVER I appeared to keep up my ſpirits, and aſſume a reſolution neceſſary for the undertaking I was embarked in, I felt the parting from my father and yourſelf a ſevere taſk, and was extremely melancholy and diſtreſſed that night.

The following morning the Captain introduced me to ſeveral gentlemen paſſengers, and aſſured me I ſhould find half a dozen very charming women at dinner; the Governor of St. Helena's lady and daughter, with four young handſome ladies, going to India to ſee their friends, and make their fortunes. This laſt intelligence diſguſted me: I had no idea a young woman of delicacy could go on ſuch a voyage with

with an avowed intention of getting well married; I therefore held them in very little eſtimation. At dinner we all aſſembled, and were introduced to each other. The Governor's lady, Mrs. Morriſon, is a very polite, agreeable woman, about forty; the daughter, Miſs Julia, near nineteen, and, without being beautiful, is the moſt captivating girl I ever ſaw: her face is pleaſing, and rather more than agreeable, good features, and a tolerable complexion; but there is good-humour, ſweetneſs, and ſteadineſs in every look. She is elegantly made, and her whole appearance is intereſting, and claims attention. The other four young ladies had much greater pretenſions to beauty and admiration: they certainly obtained it; but then your admiration ſtopt at the face, and, after an hour's converſation, the heart involuntarily returned to the modeſt, amiable Julia, without arrogance, vanity, or envy. To thoſe who ſought for the gratification of the eyes only, thoſe ladies had aſſuredly the firſt claims; but the man who could diſtinguiſh merit, would in a few moments be intereſted for the lovely Julia. I found my partiality increaſe every day: a Mr. Moſely, who had been in England for education, was about my age, and was returning to his father at Bengal, held the ſame ſentiments with myſelf; and his pretenſions being every way ſuperior to mine, I was condemned to ſilence and deſpair. The other ladies had each of them their admirers; but one of them, a Miſs Halliday, treated me with a particular diſtinction. As I felt nothing for her but the civility every lady, particularly in a ſituation like our's was entitled to, I did not for

a long

a long time notice her partiality. Mr. Moſely firſt took upon him to obſerve it, and rallied me always when Julia was preſent about Miſs Halliday. I told him, what I really believed, that he did me an honour I by no means deſerved, and that I was confident ſhe had no preference of me to any other gentleman. However Moſely perſiſted in his own conjectures, and at length induced Mr. Thompſon, a gentleman who was fond of her, to credit his tale: the conſequence was, Thompſon watched me narrowly. As I conceived Moſely's addreſſes would be accepted by Mrs. Morriſon for her daughter, I avoided every attention to Julia, and rather ſhunned than courted her ſociety; though my heart murmured, I was ſenſible I did right. I therefore more frequently chatted with the other ladies; and Miſs Halliday often contrived to draw me into arguments with her alone, and then compliment me by giving up her opinion to mine.

Where is the man, my dear ſiſter, that is free from vanity where your lovely ſex is concerned? I had ſeen little of the world, ſtill leſs of the female part of it: I was therefore pleaſed and gratified by Miſs Halliday's politeneſs, and was inſenſibly drawn on to ſhew her particular notice. Thompſon took every opportunity to affront me by contradiction and ridicule. I bore a good deal, not to diſturb the peace of the company; but at length his inſolence became ſo intolerable, that I was compelled one evening to tell him I could no longer brook his behaviour, and that immediately on our arrival at St. Helena, I expected he would give me the ſatisfaction a gentleman had a right to demand from unprovoked

unprovoked ill treatment. He gladly accepted the challenge, and from that time behaved with more decency, though rudely enough.

One morning I was ſitting in the ſtate-room, a book in my hand, though not juſt then attending to its contents, when Miſs Julia entered. Seeing me, ſhe would have withdrawn. I ran and caught her hand. "Do not let me drive you hence, Miſs Morriſon: I will call Mr. Moſely, who is juſt gone on the quarter-deck."

"And for what, Sir, ſhould you call Mr. Moſely?" ſaid ſhe, evidently ſurpriſed; "I have no buſineſs with him."

"Ah! Miſs Julia," returned I, "do not ſeek to diſguiſe from me what is ſo palpable to every one."

"I really do not underſtand you, Mr. Oſwald. I uſe no diſguiſe, for I have no ſecrets. Mr. Moſely is nothing to me, nor have I any concern with him more than with any other gentleman in the ſhip. You will pardon me, Sir, but I muſt think your inſinuations do me a great injury."

"If ſo, Madam, I ſincerely entreat your pardon; but I own I thought ———"

I ſtopped.

"Thought what, Sir?"

"That Mr. Moſely was ſo happy as to be particularly diſtinguiſhed by Miſs Morriſon."

"You are in a great error, Sir; I am ſorry you have no more diſcernment: but (ſmiling) where a perſon's attentions are ſo entirely devoted to one, they are apt to overlook little occurrences that may happen between others."

Saying

Saying this, with a ſlight courteſy, ſhe left the room.

When I began to conſider what had paſſed, I found a glimmering of hope ariſe in my heart. I was certain ſhe had too much candour and ſincerity to have denied her partiality for Mr. Moſely in ſuch ſtrong terms, had ſhe really felt an inclination for him. The paſſion I had been endeavouring to ſtifle, now burſt out more ſtrongly than ever. I was no longer aſſiduous about Miſs Halliday, or any one; my whole ſoul was devoted to Julia, although I never dared breathe a ſigh in her preſence.

In a few days after this converſation we arrived at St. Helena. Mrs. Morriſon gave me a very polite invitation to her houſe: we all attended her to it, but did not enter with her. As we returned, Mr. Thompſon ſaid to me, "You ſee that riſing hill, meet me to-morrow at ſix o'clock; we can then look for a convenient place."

I promiſed to be punctual. We met; two others with us. Both fired together: his ball lodged in my left thigh; I fell. I was immediately aſſiſted by the ſurgeon, the ball extracted, and I was carried to the firſt tavern at hand. The news ſoon blazed over the town. A ſervant was ſent by the ladies from the Governor's, to know my ſituation, and enquire if I could bear a removal. The ſurgeon anſwered in the affirmative; and the next morning a litter was ſent, and I was taken to the Governor's houſe, put to bed, and a nurſe ordered to attend me. Soon after, the Governor came in, a very reſpectable gentleman. He thanked me for my politeneſs

politeneſs to his wife and daughter, requeſted I would conſider his houſe as my home, and aſſure myſelf of every attention my ſituation called for. Mrs. Morriſon next paid me a viſit, and expreſſed her ſurpriſe at the event which had taken place. I thought it my duty to be explicit with her.

"And had you not any particular pretenſions to Miſs Halliday?" aſked ſhe.

"None in the world, Madam," I replied; "but I could not ſupport premeditated inſult."

"Well," ſaid ſhe, "we muſt not talk; I hope you will have no fever, and then you will ſoon get well."

However, before night the agitation of my ſpirits brought on a very violent fever. I was delirious for three days, and in extreme danger: but youth and a good conſtitution enabled me to ſtruggle through it. When I recovered my ſenſes, I found Mrs. Morriſon by my bed ſide. She kindly rejoiced to ſee me better. I mended ſo faſt, that in about a week I was enabled, with aſſiſtance, to get into the drawing-room, and was congratulated by the charming Julia on my recovery.

In the courſe of converſation the Governor aſked me ſome queſtions relative to my family, connexions, and my proſpects in India. I mentioned every particular he wiſhed to know of my connexions, and added the uncertainty we were in reſpecting the deſtiny of my uncle Seymour.

"Good God!" cried Mrs. Morriſon, "are you nephew to Harry Seymour? and did you never receive an account of his death?"

"No, Madam," I replied, "we never did."

"That

"That is very ſtrange," ſaid ſhe, "becauſe I know an account was ſent home to his elder brother; and I underſtood, his little property, about three thouſand pounds, was remitted to him likewiſe."

She then told me my uncle Henry was exceeding intimate at her father's, in Madras; that on his firſt coming to India, he had been fortunate, and obtained in about two years ſeven thouſand pounds. Within that time his brother wrote him of his father's death, and that his ſiſter had a daughter. "I well remember," added ſhe, "he remitted to his brother, through my father's hands, two thouſand pounds, one thouſand a preſent to his ſiſter, the other thouſand between his two brothers. In about a twelvemonth after this, going one evening to a ball, he overheated himſelf in dancing, and died within three days of a frenzy fever. My father wrote an account of his death to his brother; and I am very confident his remaining effects were tranſmitted to him."

I fear, from this relation, my dear ſiſter, our uncle has not uſed us well. I leave it to your prudence how far we ſhould interfere in the buſineſs.

I muſt now return to my ſituation at the Governor's. I grew better daily, but was ſtill very lame; and as my paſſion for Miſs Morriſon daily increaſed, my ſpirits remained very languid and depreſſed. Meantime Moſely made a declaration of his love for Miſs Julia, expecting, from his family and connexions, who, he knew, would not diſapprove of the alliance, his addreſſes might be received. The young lady was conſulted,

ſulted, and ſhe gave an abſolute negative, which was acceded to by her parents, who were determined not to force her inclination in favour of any one.

The ſhip was now to proceed on her voyage, but the family inſiſted upon my remaining there until I was in perfect health. I had not reſolution to refuſe ſo kind an offer. The ſhip ſailed without me; but e'er ſhe had been gone a week I repented; my affection for Miſs Morriſon made me miſerable.

A few days ago arrived here two Indiamen, one going to Madraſs, the other on her return to England. I reſolved to embark in the former, and took an opportunity to acquaint Mrs. Morriſon and the Governor of my intention.

"You are then tired of us," ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile.

"Ah! no, Madam; but I am tired of myſelf, aſhamed of the trouble I have occaſioned in your family, and unhappy that I have only bare acknowledgments to offer in return."

"You are a proud young man, and above being obliged to your friends, then," ſaid the Governor; "but there is more in this than we know of. You are anxious to raiſe a fortune, and perhaps would reject a moderate ſituation."

"No, Sir," I replied, "I am not ambitious; I only wiſh for a competency."

"That I can offer you, then, on this iſland; I can make you my Secretary, alſo give you a place worth 500l. a year. You may trade with your little capital, and ſoon increaſe it through my recommendations."

This offer was very tempting, yet I heſitated.

"Very

"Very well," cried Mrs. Morriſon, "I ſee how it is, you *will* leave us; believe me, Mr. Oſwald, we do not wiſh to force you."

Unable to bear this reproof, with great emotion I confeſſed the true ſtate of my heart, and my motives for being deſirous to quit St. Helena. The Governor, to my great ſurpriſe, was pleaſed with me.

"I will, in return for your frankneſs, Mr. Oſwald, be equally ſincere with you. Mrs. Morriſon and my daughter were prejudiced in your favour before we knew any thing relative to your family. When your life was deſpaired of, I enquired of the Captain every particular concerning you. He gave me ſuch an account of your character and connexions as confirmed thoſe prejudices. Your illneſs diſcovered a ſecret neither you nor my daughter intended ſhould be known; but in that moment both were off their guard. Mrs. Morriſon's knowledge of your late uncle is likewiſe in your favour; but you are both young. If you will remain here one year, and your conduct ſhall be ſuch as to juſtify us in giving you our daughter, we ſhall make no objections; but we ſhall look upon ourſelves as free and at liberty to retract this conditional conſent, whenever we ſee reaſon for ſo doing. We know we can depend on the prudence and honour of Julia, to be guided in that reſpect to our wiſhes. Reflect on what I have ſaid, and determine for yourſelf."

"Dear Sir, I require no time for reflection; I accept your generous and conditional offer with tranſport; and I ſolemnly promiſe never to endeavour by direct or indirect means to engage

the affections of Miſs Morriſon until authorized by you."

"Then, my good Oſwald, this is your reſting-place; *we will* depend upon *your honour*."

Thus, my dear ſiſter, have I given you an account of my preſent ſituation and delightful proſpects; grant Heaven they may be realized. Mrs. Morriſon thinks you entitled to the thouſand pounds deſigned for your mother; alſo the ſhare of your uncle's effects ſent home; and that you have a very good authority from her to claim it. You will act in this affair as Mr. Menville may judge moſt proper; all my claims I reſign entirely in your favour.—To-morrow the Lord Howe ſails for England.—Pray write me the firſt opportunity.—My affectionate reſpects to Mr. Menville, Miſs Ellis, and all your friends.—I addreſs my father by this ſame opportunity. Ever moſt ſincerely,

My Dear Emily,

Your affectionate brother,

HENRY OSWALD.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I HAVE this day received your letter, my beloved friend, and ſincerely congratulate you on your return to England. I forgive Lady Wentworth the theft ſhe has committed in taking you to Wentworth Park, as I know, in her ſituation, I ſhould have done exactly the ſame thing. Pray give me credit for my candour, when it militates againſt my own wiſhes. I had been viſiting round the neighbourhood, within ten miles of us, to ſearch for a cottage, to no purpoſe, and now behold you have found one for yourſelf, far enough from me. Cruel Mrs. Menville, cannot you divide your time between us? muſt I ever remain

thus diſtant from the friend, whoſe ſentiments and example I wiſh to imitate? And, to complete my mortification, find myſelf *compelled* to decline an invitation I would with joy accept if *I could*. But, alas! I am not permitted; a ſituation, intereſting at preſent to my family, and which will very ſhortly prove ſo to me in its effects, impedes my wiſhes, and juſtifies the apprehenſions of my friends, as to preclude all thoughts of a journey. I have, however, inſiſted upon Miſs Neville's going; and who do you think will be her eſcort? (for Colemore will not leave me;) Martin. He was here this morning when your letter came; and hearing of our difficulties, offered to accompany Miſs Neville; my mother's maid will attend her, and return by the ſtage. I had not courage to refuſe the poor fellow, though I think he is wrong; for ſurely there are no hopes for *him!* And ſo this Paradiſe is in Lady Wentworth's neighbourhood. Happy woman! Yet, thank Heaven, it is not in Wales: I dare not murmur, though much diſſatisfied.

I thank you for Harry's letter. I hope he will ſoon be happily ſettled. But what ſhall we think of that uncle of your's? If he has concealed his brother's letters and remittances, what a horrid wretch he muſt be. I never loved him. He blaſted the favourite wiſh of my heart; he brought miſery on my deareſt friend: in ſhort, his whole conduct has been guided by deteſtable ambition and avarice; and from ſuch a diſpoſition, every evil action may be expected. My father adviſes you to ſend him a copy of your brother's letter, telling him a copy has likewiſe been ſent to him, and requeſt an anſwer ſuch as you may produce

to

to Dr. Ellis, and ſend to your brother. As this anſwer is dictated, you muſt be guided in your further proceedings. I wiſh ſuch a wretch to be made an example of.

I am pleaſed with the proſpect you have of St. Bernard's company, for ſhe certainly will be at liberty ſoon; and I hope you give me credit for my generoſity in wiſhing you a companion that may be likely to leſſen the value of my friendſhip.

As Miſs Neville will ſoon be with you, I truſt that ſhe will very quickly return with you and her ſiſter; I muſt inſiſt upon it you do not exceed three weeks. I have a right to expect a return of the ſame compliment I paid you; and in leſs than ſix weeks I look forward to a ſimilar confinement: but let me not be diſappointed, as you wiſh not to be anſwerable for the conſequences. In three days Miſs Neville ſets off. Happy girl! I envy her feelings, to embrace a beloved ſiſter; to ſee my deareſt and moſt valued friends, equally friends to her and her's. Ah! what can be more delightful than ſuch an interview; I am ſure it requires all my philoſophy and love for my huſband, to reconcile me to the diſappointment I am obliged to ſubmit to. I truſt to your generoſity to reward me for my ſelf-denial, by writing me conſtantly until I have the happineſs of ſeeing you. My beſt wiſhes to dear Lady Wentworth and family; and believe me ever

Your truly ſincere

And affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

Your

Your brother Anthony has received your letter, and will write by Miſs Neville.—Your ſiſter continues as amiable as ever.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I AM juſt returned from Wentworth Park, where I eſcorted Miſs Neville.——Sir Charles inſiſted that I ſhould paſs the night there, and I gladly conſented. Mrs. Menville is more beautiful than ever: ſurrounded by her friends, reſtored to tranquillity, and free from anxiety, ſhe is no longer the ſame woman as when I ſaw her in Cornwall, or at Lyons. There is a ſoft pleaſing melancholy in her countenance, and a ſerenity in her manners, that intereſts every heart; and when ſhe ſpeaks, how elegant her language, what underſtanding and poliſhed ſentiments! Ah! Jack, I ſhall never love any other woman; yet I have no hopes; Harley will certainly be the happy,

happy, envied man: and though, from circumſtances, I am well aſſured Lord Longfield loves her, I do not think he has the leaſt chance: ſhe has a mind ſuperior to grandeur or titles; they can reflect neither honour nor pleaſure on a being like her.

Miſs Neville is an amiable young woman, about eight and twenty, with a very good heart and underſtanding; her perſon extremely agreeable, but——ſhe is not Mrs. Menville. Lady Wentworth is handſome, lively, and pleaſing; Mrs. Neville elegant, ſoft, and intereſting: in ſhort, they are a group of charming women. Mr. and Mrs. Moleſworth are very worthy people; Sir Charles every thing a man ought to be, good and affectionate.

I am unequal to the deſcription of the ſcene among the ladies on their firſt meeting; female pens alone can do it juſtice. But, upon my ſoul, I was ſo oddly affected, that I ran out of the room to recover myſelf, and remained till I thought they were more compoſed. On my return, Mrs. Menville addreſſed me with ſuch expreſſions of kindneſs and eſteem for my attentions to herſelf and friends, that I would fly to the antipodes to merit her approbation. She has taken a houſe, a cottage ſhe calls it, in a very retired ſituation, nine miles from Wentworth Park. Nothing ſhall induce her to live in the gay world, ſhe ſays. Her child is truly beautiful; it runs about, and talks a little. How engaging is the ſweet Emily, ſo like her enchanting mother! "To the care of her child ſhe devotes her future life." But, Ah! Jack, ſhe will have other cares, I am ſure ſhe will. I have no very

very high opinion of women's ſtability; and although, if any woman does poſſeſs that virtue, I think it may be her; yet when this Harley comes, this mirror of perfection, as I am told he is, a firſt love too, it is impoſſible, ſhe never will perſevere in widowhood. At all events I have not the moſt diſtant hope, and can only look forward to her happineſs, independent of my own. What a ſelf-denial! Pity me Jack, for I am half mad at times, though I ſtruggle for firmneſs and reſolution.

I took leave of the family this morning. My emotions at parting from Mrs. Menville were viſible; ſhe ſaw it, and with a ſweetneſs peculiar to herſelf, ſaid, "When I return from Sudbury, Mr. Martin, I ſhall take poſſeſſion of my cottage. I intend to open my doors to none but *friends*; in that number I ſhall be happy to conſider Mr. Martin; and *with* Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, or Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, you will always be received with pleaſure and gratitude."

I kiſſed her lovely hand, muttered my thanks, and flew out of the room.—She ſpoke the word *friends* with an emphaſis, ſo as to preclude all other claims on her favour. So here I am, after all my Quixotiſm, reſigned to my deſtiny, and contented to be eſteemed a *friend* only.

Oh! Jack, Jack, didſt thou ever expect to ſee Bob Martin a convert to truth, ſincerity, and friendſhip? Yet ſo it is. If ſhe marries, I muſt give up all acquaintance. I can bear the diſappointment of my own hopes, but I fear I have not fortitude enough to ſupport the triumph of another, in poſſeſſing ſuch a woman.——I muſt drop the ſubject.

I am now going to call on Mr. Smith, and likewiſe on one other perſon, to whom I am deſirous of making all the reparation I can for former follies.

I rejoice to hear your affairs are in a train of accommodation, which will facilitate your return to England.—Truſt me, Jack, there is no experience we are ſo likely to profit by as that which is dearly bought; I therefore hope, both you and myſelf will henceforth become good members of ſociety.

Your's, ſincerely,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

MISS NEVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

SAFELY arrived at Wentworth Park, my dear Madam, I take the firſt opportunity to obey your commands, and tell you how your charming friend looked. The feelings of our hearts often ſuperſede ceremony. The moment I entered the room, I flew involuntarily to Mrs. Menville, and embraced her with ſtreaming eyes; ſhe received me with a ſiſterly affection. My poor Lucy now advanced towards me: I had not ſeen her. Oh! Madam, what did I feel at that moment! Conſcious of the evils I had brought on her and her's, I ſhrunk from her, fell into a chair, and was with difficulty preſerved from fainting.

"Fanny, my dear Fanny," cried ſhe, much affected, "ſpare yourſelf and me: we muſt ſubmit to the decrees of Heaven."

This

This kind reflection reſtored me; we both wept, and ſoon recovered. I was then introduced to Lady Wentworth and Mrs. Moleſworth, and apologized to the ladies for my inattention.

I had now time to look at our dear Mrs. Menville. She is paler and thinner; but with thoſe diſadvantages ſhe is handſomer than any woman I know; and the ſweetneſs and elegance of her manners muſt engage all hearts, if ſhe had no beauty at all. How kindly did ſhe receive me, how affectionate her enquiries after her dear Mrs. Colemore and family! I am grieved that ſhe has abſolutely taken a houſe at ſuch a diſtance from us; but it being ſo near Wentworth Park, is, I ſuppoſe, one inducement. In the country nine or ten miles is nothing, only an hour and a half's drive, and her friends intend to reſide chiefly here, I find.

Mrs. Menville has written to her uncle, and ſent him a copy of her brother's letter, but never will take ſteps to compel him to do her juſtice. She ſays ſhe does not want the money; her child will be rich enough; ſhe never, therefore, will bring diſgrace on a relation, for tranſactions ſo unjuſt, for any benefit to herſelf. "My brothers," added ſhe, "may do as they pleaſe; but I hope intereſt will not lead them to a proſecution, which muſt in ſome degree reflect on the family."

I muſt own I admire her ſentiments, and think them right; but with all the reaſons ſhe has to diſlike this man, from his behaviour to her and Harry, I doubt I ſhould ſcarcely ſuffer him to enjoy his ill-gotten ſpoils in quiet, was I in her place. I am delighted with her little girl, and ſhall be its chief companion, I believe: ſhe is a lovely

lovely child, and juſt beginning to talk, which I think the moſt engaging age. Her mother doats on her, and well ſhe may.

My ſiſter Neville is very low-ſpirited, and greatly altered; that, indeed, from the diſtreſſes ſhe has ſuffered, I do not wonder at. She delights to talk of Captain Harley, and is an enthuſiaſt in her gratitude: it is not ſurpriſing ſhe ſhould be ſuch; for I ſcarce ever heard of a man ſo truly beneficent. I long to ſee him.

We are going to-morrow to view Mrs. Menville's cottage. On a certainty ſhe has taken it for fourteen years. I ſmiled: ſhe aſked the reaſon. I told her there was very little probability ſhe would reſide ſo long in a cottage

"If I live, I think I ſhall, unleſs there are inconveniencies in the houſe I am not aware of," anſwered ſhe.

"But," ſaid I, "conſider the good fortune Miſs Menville will be entitled to; you would not wiſh to bury her there, ſurely?"

"We will conſider of that hereafter," replied ſhe; "Emily has many years of infancy yet to look forward to, and many diſorders to encounter with."

Tears came into her eyes. I changed the ſubject.

We are juſt returned from Grove-Houſe, Mrs. Menville's future reſidence. It is indeed a delightful ſituation, but extremely retired. She is ſo very earneſt to get into it, that I believe we ſhall viſit you within the three weeks.

Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth look forward with hope and exultation to the union of Captain Harley and their friend; but they are delicately cautious not to mention his name, though

though Mr. Menville has now been dead four months; and, according to the faſhionable mode of mourning, ſhe will change her weeds ſoon, and then there can be no impropriety ſurely in her receiving him as a friend.

I have ſome news for you. Sir Charles has this morning had a letter from a gentleman at Boulogne. Old Shepherd is dead; and it comes out that he has mortgages on Mr. Menville's eſtates that are not ſold, and in all probability Mr. Menville's own money was ſupplied for the purpoſe, as there was a great deficiency in the caſh expected from the tenants. Mrs. Shepherd. a ſtranger to the language, and not knowing what is become of her daughter, is about to return again to England.

Sir Charles Wentworth will accompany us to Sudbury, as Mrs. Menville requeſts him and Mr. Colemore to be truſtees for her child, and take all her affairs out of her uncle's hands.

All this family, my dear Madam, join in the kindeſt and moſt perfect good wiſhes for your health and happineſs, with

Your ever obliged,

And affectionate,

FRANCES NEVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

CAPTAIN HARLEY

TO SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH.

AFTER a tedious paſſage, and more diſagreeable journey, owing to the breaking down of our carriage, five miles from any town, we are ſafely, and without any injury to our perſons, arrived at the hotel in Jermyn-Street. Mr. Sackville will be with you in a few days. How hard is it, dear Wentworth, that the perſon moſt anxious to be of your party, dares not venture to approach your houſe? I am really miſerable. When deprived of hope, I reſigned myſelf to my unfortunate deſtiny; and tho' bereft of happineſs, I became tranquil and compoſed; but now, by an unexpected event, I am at liberty to indulge thoſe feelings I have ſo long repreſſed, and am agitated by ten thouſand hopes and fears. O! Wentworth, ſhould I ever be ſo happy as to call

call that charming woman mine, how perfect will be my felicity! In point of fortune I am greatly her inferior; but *that*, I am ſure, will only be a ſecondary conſideration, and never will influence a mind like her's. Lord Longfield, I know, is paſſionately fond of Mrs. Menville, and he has a thouſand advantages over me, fortune, title, perſon, and a truly-reſpectable character: yet ſuch is his honour and delicacy, he aſſured me he conſidered my addreſſes as a prior right, and never would preſume to urge his ſuit, whilſt there was a probability mine might be accepted. Generous man! I hope, *ſhould* I be ſucceſsful, my happineſs will not be productive of pain to him.

I have had a letter from the Count this morning. That nobleman and his charming daughters are at Madrid. He hopes ſoon to congratulate himſelf on Antonia's marriage with the Duke de Solis, which is the favourite wiſh of his heart; and then how happy he ſhould be to viſit his Engliſh friends. That worthy nobleman has my beſt wiſhes for the ſucceſs of his; for, notwithſtanding the Duke's improper conduct reſpecting myſelf, he is in very general eſtimation at Madrid, and has many very good qualities. Antonia is a captivating woman; whoever has the honour to call her his, muſt be a happy man.

To-morrow I intend to fix my little protegé at a ſchool near town. Poor little fellow, he is exceſſively fond of me, but ſeems much diſconcerted nobody underſtands him but myſelf and Clayton.

We ſhall go down to Sudbury three days hence. Ah! how painful will be my reflections, how delicious my hopes! I wiſh to ſee my dear Mrs. Colemore,

Colemore, alſo to make myſelf an intereſt, if poſſible, with Mr. and Mrs. Oſwald. I muſt engage all my friends in my behalf againſt the hour on which the future happineſs of my life depends. The day ſix months from Menville's death I ſhall write. O! Wentworth, dear Wentworth, ſecond my wiſhes with the warmth of a friend, of a brother; think what I have at ſtake.—Clayton joins me in every good wiſh to the ladies and yourſelf; make our beſt reſpects, and be aſſured I am on all occaſions,

Your faithful and obliged,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

I hope Mrs. Neville gets better in health and ſpirits: ſhe ought to be ſo with ſuch deſirable companions. Be ſo good to tell her I ſhall endeavour to ſettle all her affairs with her tenant, and every other command of her's in which I can be of ſervice.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

SIR Charles has doubtleſs informed you, my dear Lady Wentworth, that we are happily at Sudbury, without either fatigues or accidents. Mrs. Colemore was delighted to ſee us, and we all ſhed tears of joy at meeting. My brother and his lady were there ready to receive us. I am much pleaſed with Mrs. Oſwald, and though her choice was rather a precipitate one, yet when we reflect on the vivacity of the French, and how eagerly they purſue a project once formed, the wonder is in ſome meaſure done away. She is really a very agreeable woman, though many years older than Anthony; ſhe offered me her ſiſterly affection, in terms ſo polite and friendly, as much encreaſed my eſteem for her; ſhe lamented the diſtance between us; I aſſured her it was trifling, and I hoped would be of little conſequence,

conſequence, as we might be inmates of each other's houſes, alternately; this arrangement appeared to pleaſe her. My brother, I find, makes frequent excurſions to London, and remains two or three days, I fear ſhe will find him a man of the world, and not a Mr. Colemore, or a Sir Charles Wentworth; however, a French woman can bear thoſe things, becauſe conſtancy in a huſband is ſeldom expected with them; but I wiſh, for both their ſakes, he may grow a little domeſticated. They are all very angry I did not bring Emily; I told them you poſitively refuſed to part with her—they call you a monopoliſer. Mrs. Neville is much pleaſed with the houſe taken for her, ſhe takes poſſeſſion of it next week, with her ſiſter and children; may her future days be peaceful and happy. Captain Harley and Mr. Clayton have been down at Sudbury theſe ten days paſt, and left it only the day previous to our arrival. They are gone to ſpend a week with a friend of Clayton's, and then proceed to Wentworth-Park. Mr. Clayton's houſe has been newly painted, and not yet proper to be inhabited. Captain Harley has ſettled Mrs. Neville's buſineſs, and paid Mr. Colemore for her ſeven hundred and thirty pounds, the moiety of what was due for rent from her eſtate. I thought ſhe looked extremely hurt, that Harley had given it to Mr. Colemore.

"She was very much mortified ſhe ſhould continually trouble him, but ſhe ſuppoſed they ſhould very ſeldom ſee him now."

"Oh yes, cried Mr. Colemore, he uſed to reſide a great part of his time with Mr. Clayton, and I hope he will not forget his old correſpondent; ſhe has given him ſome hours at my expence,

pence, and I ſhall expect he returns them to me in perſon."

Colonel Huntley did me the honour of a viſit this morning; he is a polite ſenſible man, and I am pleaſed the eſtate is in ſuch good hands. From what we can learn here, Shepherd has behaved infamouſly in the truſt Mr. Menville beſtowed upon him—but he is no more, and I ſhall never trouble his widow nor myſelf, to inveſtigate matters that could only prove a ſource of vexation to both. Sir Charles and Mr. Colemore have acceded to my wiſhes; I have made over to them, in truſt for my child, every thing Mr. Menville died poſſeſſed of; paying me my jointure, fifteen hundred a year, there will not be ſix hundred remaining; ſuch depredations have been made on a fortune of nearly ſeven thouſand a year, when I married, beſides a large property in the funds, all of which is drawn out; yet, as there will be a long minority, and every ſhilling ſhall accumulate, (for I will ſupport my child at my own expence) ſhe will be an exceeding good fortune when ſhe comes of age. Sir Charles will return to you on Saturday; no perſuaſions can induce him to exceed his purpoſed time—happy pair! with what tranſport have I beheld his eyes dwell with fondneſs on thoſe of his wife; how has he exulted, when her charming converſation engaged the attention of the company—how obſervant of every wiſh of her's, that could communicate pleaſure! oh, my dear Lady Wentworth, your's is a union of minds, of hearts which can know no decreaſe of affection, ſince founded on mental accompliſhments, and daily ſupplied by good ſenſe, and good humour on both ſides. In a married life I have always thought there

there muſt be a mutual forbearance, a mutual accommodation to procure happineſs, an obſervance of the moſt minute things that can be ſuppoſed to give pleaſure; it is from the neglect of trifles, that many diſagreements ariſe in a wedded life; both expect too much, and give too little, and in conſequence, trivial matters create diſputes, 'till, in the warmth of argument, expreſſions eſcape on both ſides, ſeldom forgiven, and never forgotten, which occaſion a pique and reſentment, often productive of the moſt ſerious conſequences. I have obſerved, with the utmoſt ſatisfaction, that in your conduct towards each other, nothing of this kind ever appears; you have, my deareſt friend, the faireſt proſpect for continued felicity I ever beheld; perſevere in your preſent ſentiments, and you have nothing to apprehend. I pity Mrs. Neville, her ſpirits are depreſſed beyond any thing I ever ſaw. She looks at me ſometimes with ſuch an expreſſion in her eyes, as really hurts me; ſhe knows little of my heart, if ſhe ſuppoſes me any obſtacle to her wiſhes; on the contrary, I wiſh her ſucceſs with the man ſhe prefers. How dangerous is gratitude, when man is the object! a feeling, ſenſible heart, is loſt before you know its weakneſs, being miſled by one idea you think right to encourage, becauſe founded on a proper principle; you are far gone in a tender paſſion when you deceived yourſelf, and ſuppoſed it was the effect of gratitude only. I, my beloved friend, have experienced how far a ſenſe of grateful ideas may work upon a mind of ſenſibility. You know the ſentiments of my heart; when I married Mr. Menville, I ſcruple not to ſay I preferred another; but the generous offers made to me; the advantages

tages held out to my family, the delight of obeying my father, and making him happy, were ſuch powerful motives, that I ſhould have deſpiſed myſelf, if an indulgence of a preferable love had biaſſed my mind to regard my *own* feelings *only*. I married with a grateful heart, how ſoon was that ripened into love! in the hour of ſorrow, of reproach, when deſerted by my huſband, and expoſed to the cenſure of the world, I ſtill loved the father of my child, and looked forward with hope to a reconciliation; my hopes are blighted, I have therefore transferred every tender feeling, I have compromiſed every good I hope for now in this life, in the felicity of my Emily; in her are centered all my earthly expectations of happineſs; grant, heaven, they may be realized! you will have the goodneſs, my dear friend, to let your ſteward call ſometimes at Grove Houſe, and ſee that the workmen diſpatch their buſineſs, for I long to be ſettled. If we may judge from circumſtances, Mrs. Colemore will ſoon be confined; I cannot leave her 'till the dreaded event is over. Mr. Colemore is extremely attentive and affectionate, they are a happy couple, and the worthy Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, are delighted beyond expreſſion. I hope Mr. Sackville is with you by this time; pray take care you do not ſpoil Emily; remember, ſhe is not to be too much indulged. My beſt compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Moleſworth; I am ever, my dear Lady Wentworth,

Your obliged and affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

JOY to you, my dear Lady Wentworth, on the return of Sir Charles, accompanied by ſuch good news; Mrs. Colemore was brought to bed yeſterday afternoon of a lovely boy, a fortnight ſooner than ſhe expected, both herſelf and child are exceeding well. Colemore is out of his wits with tranſport; Doctor and Mrs. Ellis thankful to heaven for the bleſſing; indeed we are all in heroics. Sir Charles cannot be detained another day—I hope in leſs than three weeks to follow him. I had a letter yeſterday from my uncle, he poſitively denies receiving any remittances or account of his brother's death; talks loudly of puniſhing the author of ſuch invidious reports, and ſeems to be very angry. He is not pleaſed with my intention of taking *my* affairs out of his hands; accuſes me of ingratitude, levity, and I don't know what beſides; thinks no man more entitled

entitled to take care of my buſineſs, than himſelf; reflects on my dear father's memory for the ſame ungrateful conduct in the diſpoſition of his will, &c. His letter only confirms me in my determination to purſue my firſt deſign, which I ſhall do with firmneſs, avoiding, if poſſible, any quarrel with him; and as to the effects of my uncle Seymour, which ever way they are diſpoſed of, I ſhall make no further enquiry; Anthony does not ſeem to be ſo quietly diſpoſed, but I entreat him to be ſilent, until he hears again from his brother. Adieu, my dear friend, my beſt reſpects to all your family.

Your's ſincerely,

EMILY MENNILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

PRESENT my beſt love and warmeſt congratulations to Mrs. Colemore, and do you, my deareſt friend, accept the grateful thanks of Sir Charles and myſelf, for your attention to him whilſt he was your happy companion; he writes himſelf to Mr. Colemore; I rejoice in the happineſs of Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, with my whole heart. Sir Charles found, on his return here, Mr. Sackville, Captain Harley and Mr. Clayton; a pretty quantity of beaus for one lady (my aunt forming no pretenſions) yet would you believe it, ſo thoroughly are the days of flirtation at an end, and the love of admiration ſubdued, that I flew to the arms of my huſband with tranſport, and the remainder of the day had neither eyes nor ears for any one but him. What

folly in an old married woman! this morning I began to think how ridiculous I had behaved, but mine is an incorrigible heart, for whenever he appears, it flies to meet him, though I obſerve more decorum than on his firſt appearance after eight days of abſence. Indeed there is nothing I think ſo diſguſting, as an apparent fondneſs; complaiſance, attention, and a deſire to pleaſe, may be expreſſed a thouſand ways, without drawing particular obſervation, and I am quite angry with myſelf, for being ſo unguarded yeſterday. Your houſe is ready for your reception as ſoon as you pleaſe; little Emily aſks for her mamma daily, and I am obliged to court her very much, to conſider me in that light. We have had a letter from Lord Longfield, he returns in leſs than a month to England; he is, he ſays, ſo truly a Briton, as to find no happineſs out of his own country, and every obſervation he makes on the different governments, manners, cuſtoms, inhabitants, and even amuſements in other countries, confirms his prejudices, or rather his judgment, in favour of his own. 'Tis true, he adds, you meet with worthy perſons of every deſcription, abroad; your ideas are enlarged, you are more liberal in your ſentiments of men and manners, and were it only to draw a juſt comparative view, young men of faſhion ſhould viſit the continent, but not until they are thoroughly acquainted with the government of Great-Britain, and have taken a tour through their own country. Sir Charles and Captain Harley are united in the ſame opinion; the former ſaid,

"He had often bluſhed for his country-men, when occaſionally aſked for particulars relative to their

their own conſtitution in England, or deſcriptions of towns and their different manufactories, by intelligent curious people abroad; he has ſeen them unable to anſwer, and entirely uninformed in ſuch matters, as no Engliſhman, leaving his own country to viſit others, ſhould be ignorant of: but the great folly is taking a young man from college, and ſending him directly to travel, without being perfectly acquainted with the local advantages he derives from being born a Briton. Abroad, he imbibes falſe prejudices, erroneous principles, a contempt for his own country, and a fondneſs for the frivolities of others, without deriving any benefit to his underſtanding, or improvement in his manners. Too frequently the heart is corrupted, and he returns to injure the peace, or poiſon the minds of thoſe unhappily connected with him. This is an evil," added Sir Charles, "that calls aloud for reformation, and thoſe perſons who have the care of youth, ſhould pay more attention to the cultivation of their minds and morals, than merely ſtudying Greek and Latin, to make a few orations, which are, generally ſpeaking, forgotten as ſoon as they are pronounced."

Thus much I remember of the converſation, becauſe delivered by my huſband, and like a good wife, I implicitly ſubſcribe to his opinions.

I encloſe a letter, which I think is from your worthy St. Bernard; you muſt have ſeen in the papers of laſt week, that the convent doors are opened for ſuch as chuſe to quit them; I hope this letter brings you intelligence of her deſign to quit France, and reſide with you. See in this wiſh, if I deſerve to be ſtyled a monopoliſer, when I am deſirous you ſhould have a compa-

nion of ſuch merit, as will aſſuredly leſſen my conſequence in your neighbourhood—judge if I do not prefer your happineſs to my own gratification; indeed I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf, if I could be ſo ſelfiſh. Tell my dear Mrs. Colemore, when you name the day of your return; I will come two days previous to *that*, to *viſit her*, and conduct you back to Wentworth Park. *All* in this family preſent every good wiſh for the health of our friend, and the moſt affectionate and reſpectful remembrances to the dear Mrs. Menville, who is in truth a *monopoliſer* of every one's affections.

Sincerely your's,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

THAT we quitted you with much regret, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am ſure you muſt be ſenſible of, and it is a little hard upon ſincere and affectionate hearts, that there is a neceſſity for ſeparation; but what is the diſtance of ſeventy or eighty miles, to friends? it will only draw us the cloſer by and bye, for I ſhall expect you to ſtay with me a *long time*, when able to take a little journey, Mr. Colemore and your ſweet boy of the party, that there may be no drawbacks upon our felicity, ſo that in reciprocal viſits, we may ſpend much of our time together. On our arrival at the park, we found only Sir Charles and Mr. Sackville, the gentlemen, with Mr. and Mrs. Moleſworth, were gone to town; the laſt mentioned return in a fortnight, the others, I ſuppoſe, will go to Sudbury, and viſit you.

On Tueſday I take poſſeſſion of my houſe; within a month I expect the worthy St. Bernard, and

and ſoon after I intend to inoculate my dear child —what an undertaking, my heart ſinks at the idea, but it muſt be done. We expect Lord Longfield every day on a viſit, I hope it will be deferred 'till my removal. Mr. Sackville is exceedingly fond of Mrs. Neville; was there not ſo great a diſproportion in ages, I am perſuaded he would make her an offer; he is really a worthy man, and doats on Sir Charles and his lady, like a father. I have received a moſt obliging letter from Lady Hartwill, which I have anſwered, and requeſted ſhe and her ſiſter would honour me with their company, to ſpend ſome time at my cottage; Lady Wentworth and her ſteward have had it furniſhed exactly as I could wiſh, elegantly neat, and taſteful, but not fine; I have regulated my houſhold; Petty I ſhall keep for Emily; a very worthy perſon, who is recommended as houſe-keeper, and to attend me; a cook, houſe and laundry maid—a neat poſt-chaiſe, with a poſtillion, one footman and a gardener, compleats my eſtabliſhment. I look forward, my dear Mrs. Colemore, to tranquillity, if the Almighty ſpares my child, and grants me life to ſee her ſettled, theſe are all the bleſſings I have to wiſh for on earth. I ſhall impatiently expect to ſee you; pray make my grateful compliments to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, and love to Mrs. and Miſs Neville. Kiſs your ſweet boy for me.

I am, ever affectionately your's,

E. MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. MENVILLE.

PARDON, madam, a preſumption which I painfully feel, and which, perhaps, may incur your diſpleaſure, the ſevereſt of all puniſhments. I have long repelled the ardent wiſhes of my heart; I have condemned myſelf to ſilence, to abſence, that I might not wound your delicacy; deign then to pardon an intruſion I can no longer repreſs; condeſcend, with your uſual goodneſs, to remember a man, who in every different ſituation you have known, has been devoted to you alone; a man who feels himſelf unworthy of you, according to the ſordid maxims of the world, and how much more ſo in comparative merit; yet remember, ah! remember the time, the happy hour, when Mr. Oſwald permitted my addreſſes, and bid me look up to you with hope. Heavy

has

has been my diſappointments, doubly ſo, becauſe you were not happy. You are now reſtored to your friends and the world; far be it from me to aſk more at preſent, than permiſſion to accompany Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, on their next viſit; you will find me obedient to your commands, and not preſuming on your condeſcenſion. Propitious be your ſilence, for I will not dare to requeſt a line, but entreat you madam to believe, that to you is devoted the remainder of my days.

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO FREDERIC HARLEY, ESQ.

SIR,

I Shall evermore think myſelf obliged by the kind remembrance of my friends; to you I have particular obligations, for the intereſt you have taken in all my concerns. There was a time (it would be an affectation, I diſdain to deny it) when I conſidered Captain Harley in the deareſt and neareſt point of view, and I ſcruple not to confeſs, that in contributing to his happineſs, I ſhould have found *my own*. *You* know the motives which prevailed on me to change my ſentiments, and *I know* I was juſtified in your unbiaſſed judgment. I muſt now, ſir, truſt again to your juſtice, even if againſt your own wiſhes. I ſhall, with the ſincereſt pleaſure, receive you as a viſitor with our common friends; I ſhall be happy to acknowledge my obligations for an offer which

might gratify the pride of *any* woman, and perhaps I am the only woman ſo ſituated as to find it impoſſible to accept it; but it muſt be ſo. I never ſhall marry again, 'tis a fixed reſolution; I have many ſtrong reaſons for my determination, and I flatter myſelf you are ſo well acquainted with my principles, that when I have told you I have made up my mind, and devote my life to the care of my child *only*, and never will ſuffer *any* other duty to interfere with that I owe to *her*; I truſt you will acquieſce with the propriety of my reſolution on this ſubject, and give up every idea which may militate againſt it. Under that conviction, and in the company of my friends, I ſhall, with the higheſt pleaſure, receive Captain Harley; in any other light I admit no man. I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your obliged, and ſincere

humble ſervant,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A Thouſand thanks, my dear Mrs. Colemore, for the few lines you have kindly written, and for the good account you give me of yourſelf and child. I begin now to *taſte* of happineſs, when I can rejoice in the felicity of my friends; yet as there muſt ever be a drawback on human felicity, I received a letter yeſterday, which has given me great pain, from Captain Harley. Perhaps, as *you* are his confidante, you may be no ſtranger to its contents. I have been obliged to give a negative to his wiſhes: it has hurt me exceedingly, to conſider that I have given him pain; I have been unfortunately the cauſe of diſtreſs and uneaſineſs to thoſe I moſt eſteem, not voluntarily indeed, yet nevertheleſs I conſider myſelf as the cauſe, and greatly deplore the effect. I hope he will be reconciled to my determination;

why

why will he not turn to Mrs. Neville, there is an affectionate heart open to receive him; then we might unite in friendſhip without any alloy; at preſent I am uneaſy and diſſatisfied; I am ſenſible of my obligations to Captain Harley, I reſpect, I eſteem him, but no more. Let him entertain the ſame ſentiments for me, and he will reſtore my peace, and render my happineſs compleat.

This morning I had a viſit from Mr. Martin, he congratulated me on my recovered tranquillity, and improved health; he ſaid,

"Content was the greateſt beautifier in nature," he was happy to ſee my bloom reſtored.

I thanked him cordially for all his kindneſs to me.

"I do indeed deſerve ſome praiſe," ſaid he, "for being ſo abſtracted, as to rejoice at an event which throws me for ever at a diſtance, and makes Harley happy; I know him not, but his merit is unqueſtionable, ſince approved by Mrs. Menville."

"Captain Harley," replied I, "is certainly a very amiable man, and I was once very near being connected with him for life; particular circumſtances intervened, and prevented it; ſince that time I have conſidered Captain Harley as a friend, as *I* do *you* Mr. Martin, (how his face was animated) but in no other point of view. I never ſhall know a ſecond marriage, it is a reſolution formed on principle, and never will be broken. It will give me pleaſure to ſee Captain Harley, Mr. Martin, Lord Longfield, with any of my friends, but in that light *only*. I will never receive lovers, nor will my doors be open a ſecond time to perſons of that deſcription, however, I

may

may be obliged to their preferable eſteem." Martin's eyes abſolutely ſparkled with pleaſure.

"I accept with pleaſure, madam, your permiſſion to wait on you *with* other friends; I will never infringe upon your laws, and however painful to my feelings, I condemn myſelf to eternal ſilence, on any ſubject diſpleaſing to you."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Martin, and I repeat, that under ſuch reſtrictions, I ſhall be ever happy to ſee you, and remember with pleaſure, how much I am indebted to your kindneſs and friendly attentions." Being alone, I did not aſk him to dine with *me*, but I told him, "if he would do me a favour, he ſhould call on Lady Wentworth," I wrote a line by him, and I dare ſay he will take his dinner there, for they wiſh to ſee him, and are much pleaſed with his behaviour to me and mine. How much happier muſt that young man feel himſelf, treated with kindneſs and reſpect by worthy characters; purſuing rational pleaſures, unembittered by remorſe or painful reflections; his fortune, his health unimpaired, and his heart open to liberality and compaſſion, never failing reſources of pleaſure, where the power is equal to the will of doing good! ah! would to heaven our young men of quality would conſider what happineſs they might diffuſe among many unfortunate families, with the ſums they hourly diſſipate in extravagance and gambling! what heart-felt pleaſure, what bleſſings from the widow and fatherleſs might they derive to themſelves, by beſtowing a ſmall part of that money to their relief, which is idly ſquandered, or transferred by gambling, from one ſordid man to another, for I never can believe, but avarice is the foundation of deep play; and a propenſity

to

to that deſtructive vice, deadens every feeling, deſtroys every virtue, and fits the mind for "treaſon, villainy, or murder."

I am ſometimes uneaſy about my brother's frequent viſits to town; God forbid he ſhould aſſociate with the diſſipated and idle young men that ſwarm in London. I think to introduce him to the acquaintance of Martin; no man is better qualified to ſhew him the rocks on which he may ſplit, without care and reſolution, than he is; and I have the vanity to think, he will take pleaſure in being ſerviceable to my brother, on my account. Lord Longfield is at Wentworth Park; I have juſt had a line from Lady Wentworth, requeſting I would dine with her to-morrow: I had rather have been excuſed, but to deny would look particular, I muſt therefore comply.

I was interrupted by a moſt joyful circumſtance, the arrival of my dear madam St. Bernard, a week ſooner than I dared hope for, but a reſpectable family, to whom ſhe was known, coming to England, ſhe gladly embraced the opportunity. I cannot expreſs to you how happy I was to ſee her; Emily knew her the moment ſhe ſpoke; ſhe looked at her ſtrangely at firſt, her dreſs being altered (though ſhe is in black) but the tone of her voice, when ſhe called her Ma chére, Emily, awakened her recollection; the dear child ran to her. Mamma Bernard! cried ſhe, jumping to kiſs her; the good St. Bernard ſhed tears, nor was I unaffected. I have ſent a letter to Lady Wentworth, having a very good apology to offer now, for not waiting on her to-morrow, and I know ſhe will haſten here, being impatient to ſee my worthy nun: ſhe deſires

ſires never to be ſeen, but by my very particular friends; nor will ſhe ever, ſhe ſays, exceed the limits of my garden, orchard, and field; we have had a delightful walk there this morning; you will doat on her when you know her, ſhe is already prepared to love you.

"Nothing, my dear madam," ſaid ſhe, in our walk, "could have induced me to have quitted the convent, but the friendſhip you offered me; for although that ſituation was not my preferable choice, yet I grew perfectly reconciled to it, and had not the ſmalleſt wiſh to return into the world; but your friendſhip, your ſociety was a bleſſing I could not refuſe; I know you will permit me to live to my own heart, and indulge me in the retirement proper for the ſituation I have lived in, and been devoted to; my religious principles ſhall be ſtrictly confined to my own boſom, my practice of them ſhall diſturb no one; your lovely child, I hope, you will commit to my care; ſhe will learn Engliſh and French together; I promiſe myſelf the greateſt happineſs in being permitted to ſuperintend her education."

"And I, my dear madam, accept with thankfulneſs, your kind offer," I replied, "on every occaſion ſpeak your wiſhes, and they ſhall be fulfilled."

She embraced me with tears of gratitude; "Call me your Louiſa, do not call me madam; let me be your ſiſter, your friend!"

Next week I ſhall begin to prepare Emily for inoculation; pray for my ſucceſs, my dear friend, and that I may preſerve my fortitude under a trial ſo ſevere. The dear Louiſa deſires I will preſent her beſt reſpects to my good friends at Sudbury—Ah! here is Lady Wentworth's carriage.

She

She has juſt left us, rather diſpleaſed at my refuſal to accompany her, but I know ſhe will ſoon forgive me. She was exceedingly rejoiced to ſee the fair nun, whom ſhe was ſo much intereſted for, and kindly ſaid ſhe ſhould have an additional motive to viſit me often, as ſhe could only hope to ſee her by coming to the grove. She did not mention Captain Harley, I therefore flatter myſelf he is contented with my letter, and will not renew the ſubject. Farewell, my dear Mrs. Colemore, my ſincereſt love to all my good friends at Sudbury; remember, I expect you ſoon, and am your truly affectionate and obliged

EMILY MENVILLE.

This inſtant a letter from my brother, I expect him and his lady in three days—muſt they come unaccompanied?

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear Mrs. Colemore, has hurt me exceedingly; to *deſerve* the eſteem of my friends has ever been the firſt wiſh of my heart, and now you upbraid me with "ingratitude, cruelty, and an undue pride;" good God! what a charge, "and does Doctor Ellis, does Mrs. Ellis, hold the ſame opinion?" You call upon me *warmly* to explain my motives for refuſing Captain Harley, you ſhall be obeyed, my dear ſevere friend, and if you will judge me with your uſual candour, I hope to ſtand uncondemned in your opinion.

When Captain Harley firſt paid his addreſſes to me, I was not nineteen; the partiality of my friends had taught me to believe I was more than tolerably handſome; my underſtanding was not below the generality of my ſex, I was naturally cheerful, and my temper not a bad one; I, therefore,

therefore, without being accuſed of too much vanity, might conceive it poſſible I ſhould be the object of his wiſhes, and that he believed I could make him happy. He had thoſe advantages to which I could form no objections; I eſteemed, I own I loved him, and hoped to have been united to a man ſo truly amiable. When Mr. Menville thought fit to diſtinguiſh me, and my father requeſted me to break with Captain Harley, you well know the regret and ſorrow which attended my obedience, but it was my duty to ſubmit; the powerful reaſons urged by my father and uncle, left me no alternative; it was to ſerve my family, and obey a parent, I ſacrificed my inclinations, and married Mr. Menville. When I became his wife, his attention to me and kindneſs to my family, won my gratitude and affection. In a very ſhort time my inclinations accorded with my duty. I ſtrictly adhered to the vow I made at the altar; neither Captain Harley nor any other man, engroſſed my thoughts one moment. You know the infatuation which unhappily took place, I was neglected, inſulted and deſpiſed, driven to a comparative poverty, and from the ſociety of my friends. I endeavoured to ſupport thoſe evils with reſignation: but my dear Mrs. Colomore, though affliction may not abſolutely ſubdue the mind, it makes great ravages in the perſon, and, indeed, muſt hurt the temper. Though not yet twenty-three, ſorrow has made me no longer young nor handſome; I can ſee great changes in my face, I can feel much difference in my temper; I am no longer the cheerful lively Emily Oſwald.—I am grave, though not melancholy.

lancholy. I have the moſt perfect eſteem for Captain Harley, but I am dead to love; I ſhould rejoice in his acquaintance as a friend, but him, of all men, I ought never to marry; I was ſuſpected of an improper correſpondence with him; the woman who prejudiced my huſband with ſuch ideas, ſcarcely ſtopped there, doubtleſs ſhe made the ſame obſervations to all her acquaintance, and I have incurred the moſt ſhocking ſuſpicions; would you, my dear friend, have me juſtify thoſe ſuſpicions, by uniting myſelf to the object of them? I repeat, then, of all men, I ought never to marry Captain Harley, and if not *him*, I *never* will marry *at all*. Do me juſtice, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am neither capricious nor ungrateful, I feel myſelf indebted to Captain Harley, but with a faded perſon, an altered temper, I ſhould make him a poor return for his affection to me. There are many others would rejoice in being diſtinguiſhed by him; *you know* thoſe perſons; direct his attentions, inform his judgment, and point out to him the road to happineſs, with an amiable woman that loves him. I ſhall be impatient for your anſwer, do not let me languiſh, I hope you will pardon me for not gratifying your wiſhes, and believe that it is from principle, from conviction *alone*, I act, and therefore am intitled to candour and a fair judgment. I have conſulted my good Louiſa on the ſubject, ſhe evades giving her opinion; could I have a doubt upon my mind, I would be guided by your's, but indeed, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I can love no more; I cannot marry Captain Harley to do him juſtice; my whole affections are beſtowed upon my child, I cannot divide them.

them. Tell Doctor Ellis, tell your mother my real ſentiments; I hope they will acquit me, or I ſhall be really unhappy. I hourly expect my brother and ſiſter, do not be long after them; my mind is diſturbed; how painful to a mind of ſenſibility, the idea of wounding the boſom of another. Adieu, my dear friend, let me hear from you ſpeedily.

I am, moſt ſincerely your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I AM all aſtoniſhment. Is it poſſible Mrs. Menville can deſerve the epithets of faithleſs and ungrateful? Can that amiable friend, to whom I have ever looked up with reſpect and admiration, can ſhe be cruel and ungrateful? Impoſſible! I cannot, I will not believe it. Captain Harley is now in the houſe, the moſt unhappy of men. I have ſhewn your letter to him; I reprobate it entirely. Conſider what you owe to an affection like his. When you were abſolutely engaged to him, with your father's permiſſion and your own approbation, had he not a right to have inſiſted upon that engagement taking place? Yet to you, to your happineſs, to the apparent elegance of a brilliant proſpect, he gave up his prior right, *his own* hopes of *happineſs* for ever!

Is

Is there no gratitude, no affection due to a generoſity ſo unequalled? Even now he ſubmits to your commands; though miſerable and ill, he reſigns himſelf to your decrees.

"Never," ſaid he, juſt now, "never will I intrude my wiſhes a ſecond time on Mrs. Menville. If I have no intereſt in her heart, God forbid I ſhould ſeek to influence her mind, or work upon her compaſſion for a man ſhe no longer eſteems. I will quit England for ever, when I can bear travelling; at preſent I am too much agitated."

Indeed he is ill. How unfortunate that he ſhould have given his heart to the only woman on earth who could have rejected him! How will that obdurate woman anſwer it to Captain Harleys's friends for making him miſerable, depriving them of his ſociety, and baniſhing him his country for ever? Sir Charles is grieved and mortified beyond expreſſion. Mr. Sackville — No, I will not tell you, cruel as you are, I will not tell you what Mr. Sackville ſaid of you. But go on; live for *yourſelf* only; perſevere in thoſe falſe delicacies which are to deſtroy the happineſs of your friends; leſſen the immenſe diſtance I have been accuſtomed to think there was between you and the reſt of your ſex; be no more than a common woman, fond of power, triumphing in the pangs of a worthy man, and gratified in purſuing faſtidious notions that are to make others unhappy!

And is it to Mrs. Menville, to the deareſt friend of my heart, I preſume to write in this ſtyle! Surely it cannot be. Mrs. Menville was my monitreſs, my example through life. The miſtreſs of Grove-Houſe is no longer kind, no longer

longer generous or grateful; nor can I any longer eſteem a woman who is aſſiduous to drive from her feelings the moſt noble virtues ſhe formerly endeavoured to inculcate to others, both by precept and example.

I can write no more; my tears flow, my beſt hopes are diſappointed, and a worthy friend, an univerſal friend to mankind, rendered miſerable for life.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HOW fallacious is hope! I entered this retirement with at leaſt a proſpect of tranquillity and eaſe: I am now moſt wretched. This morning I inoculated my deareſt Emily Judge what muſt be the feelings of a mother! The dear Louiſa had ſucceeded in compoſing my mind by her excellent admonitions, when your letter came to throw me back into vexation and ſorrow. Barbarous Lady Wentworth, have I indeed loſt your eſteem? Is your friendſhip for Captain Harley ſuperior to your love for me? Could you ſuppoſe I declined his generous offer from light or capricious motives? Do me more juſtice, my once-dear Charlotte.

I encloſe a copy of my letter to Mrs. Colemore; if that does not moderate your reſentment, and plead my cauſe ſucceſsfully, I am unhappy

happy indeed. In a pleaſant retirement, in the boſom of my friends, I thought to have paſſed the remainder of my days in peace, to have devoted myſelf to the care of my child, if the Almighty is pleaſed to ſpare her to my prayers; and in the delights of friendſhip, to have recovered my loſt peace. Why will not Captain Harley add to thoſe pleaſures I promiſed myſelf? Why will he, by an undeſerved preference of me, neglect a tender, affectionate heart open to receive him? Indeed, indeed, my dear Lady Wentworth, Mrs. Menville is ſtill the ſame; not one principle of affection or gratitude is leſſened towards any of her friends: ſhe *is not* cold or faſtidious; on the contrary, ſhe painfully feels for the diſappointments of others, and laments that ſhe is compelled to appear ungrateful, and revolt againſt the advice of thoſe, whoſe opinions in every other point would not admit of the leaſt heſitation on her part.

The diſtreſs of my mind obliges me to reſign my pen: you have wrung my heart with ſorrow. Too unkind friend, adieu.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER XXXI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I AM ſorry, my dear Mrs. Menville, that for the firſt time in my life I am diſpleaſed with a letter of your's; yet know not what arguments to uſe that can induce you to reſign your own opinions to thoſe of your friends. If an unbounded affection, which has ſtood the teſt of time and ſituation; if a mind poſſeſſied of every virtue, every ſentiment of honour and generoſity; if a prior engagement never deſervedly forfeited, and a conſtancy almoſt unequalled; if to make the moſt amiable of men happy, to oblige, to gratify all your friends; if all theſe conſiderations fail to give weight to our wiſhes, and you will perſevere in your ſevere reſolutions, I have no more to ſay. I *muſt* love you; but I can no longer pride myſelf in being diſtinguiſhed by the moſt noble, the moſt generous of her ſex; perhaps my ſelf-love may be gratified, that your ſuperiority

periority is leſſened; and that, though *I may* love, yet I cannot view you with that reſpect and admiration as when I thought you poſſeſſed of all the virtues.

I am ſorry to tell you, neither my father or mother are convinced by your reaſoning; "a faded perſon, an altered temper!" Fie upon you, my dear Mrs. Menville; why not ſay, "*I* have a handſome jointure; I can live independent: Captain Harley has injured *his* fortune by acts of generoſity, by giving to the widow and fatherleſs; why then ſhould I marry a man whoſe fortune is unworthy of me; perhaps he may be generous at *my* expence."

This explanation of your ſentiments would ſilence us at once; but the pretences you make, the reaſons you adduce, carry no conviction with them. When ſorrow and affliction aſſailed you, how bright your example; adverſity ſhewed you in the moſt ſhining point of view; we looked up to you with wonder and admiration. Ah! my dear friend, does proſperity harden the heart? You are rich and independent; are you no longer generous or compaſſionate? Is not your heart capacious enough to admit love for two objects? Have you not provided for your child? Can the moſt rigid, the moſt ſcrupulous delicacy require more? You tell me "to point out an affectionate heart open to receive him." You can dictate generoſity and gratitude to *him*, yet will practiſe neither yourſelf. How blind we are to our own foibles! But it is not neceſſary you ſhould be *twice* a victim to gratitude; if your *heart* feels nothing in favour of Captain Harley, I have done for ever; but do not be too peremptory in your deciſion; think, reflect, and let your uſual good-

neſs and generoſity determine.—My father writes you a few lines: do juſtice to his ſentiments, which are dictated by a fatherly regard.—Our affectionate compliments to your amiable gueſt. —I am, and ever muſt be,

Your ſincere,

And obliged,

E. M. COLEMORE.

My father has this inſtant received another letter from your brother Harry, which I encloſe. —Pray remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Oſwald.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

My dear Mrs. Colemore,

MY brother and ſiſter are now with me; they urge, they entreat me to ſee Captain Harley: how eaſy to comply with their wiſhes, if to receive him as a friend was all that they require. Lady Wentworth is unjuſt; ſhe has given me up; I have neither ſeen nor heard from her theſe three days. You, perhaps, have followed her example. I have no friends then left; Captain Harley has the happineſs of having many; his intereſt is dearer to them than mine. I am very unfortunate.

Your letter is this moment delivered to me, with Dr. Ellis's and my brother Harry's: I ſhall ſpeak of that by and bye. Your ſeverity has almoſt broken my heart. Can you believe me a baſe, ungrateful, mercenary creature? *Can* you

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe fortune had any ſhare in my conduct or reſolution?—Good God! what an expreſſion; "he has injured *his* fortune by generoſity to the widow and fatherleſs; perhaps he may be generous at *my* expence alſo." Can you, do you think ſo meanly of me? O! no! it is impoſſible. You muſt know that I admire him, I reſpect him for his beneficence; and that Captain Harley, without one ſhilling, wou'd be more reſpectable in my eyes than thoſe that have millions, if not bleſt with *his* goodneſs of heart! It is not *his* want of merit, it is a conſciouſneſs of my own deficiencies to make him happy. I am not what I have been; he ſees not, he knows not the alterations in my perſon; he knows not, perhaps, that I have had a ſuſpected reputation, and that marrying him would too probably confirm thoſe ſuſpicions. Could he bear ſuch degrading conjectures? Should not *I* feel humbled by every ſcrutinizing eye, and ſuſpect every malicious glance was levelled at me? I ſicken at the idea. But I *will* conſider, I will examine my heart, as your good father requires; and if I can do juſtice to Captain Harley's merits——But let me not be hurried.—I know not what I can or ought to do.

My brother Harry is married to Miſs Morriſon much ſooner than he could have hoped for. He is happy beyond expreſſion; and next year they propoſe to viſit England. He has heard of his father's death, but every thing reſpecting my affairs he is ignorant of. I hope you will ſoon ſee the letter here, unleſs I am to be entirely given up by every one.

Sir Charles Wentworth has this inſtant left me: he has probed me to the heart. Captain Harley

Harley is really *very ill*; yet *he* is ſilent, he complains not, and ſubmits without murmur or expoſtulation to my requeſt.—O! my dear Mrs. Colemore, this ſilent reſignation ſubdues me; my heart is not ſtubborn nor refractory. I will write to him; *he* ſhall decide for me.

My Emily, my dear child, has taken the infection; ſhe is very poorly. The medical gentleman who attends her thinks the diſorder will appear this night or to-morrow. Judge of my anxiety: every thing muſt be ſuſpended now. Pray for me, my dear Mrs. Colemore. I can write no more.

Your affectionate,

And obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MY dear Mrs. Colemore, what have I not ſuffered for this week paſt! O! let me adore the mercy of God, that has granted my child to the prayers of a parent; and next gratefully expreſs my obligations to the gentlemen of the faculty who have attended her. My poor Emily has been on the verge of the grave. The night I wrote you laſt ſhe was ſeized with convulſions. The apothecary called in a phyſician, a friend of his: their attention and kindneſs I ſhall never forget: they preſerved *her* life, they *ſaved* mine; and I have gained two worthy and amiable friends, whoſe characters, diſpoſitions, and good ſenſe, render them truly reſpectable, independent of their medical abilities. The dear creature is now out of all danger; the diſorder has turned favourably;

ably; though very full, it is an excellent ſort, and ſhe will not, I dare ſay, be marked at all.

Congratulate me, my good friend, on an event ſo eſſential to my being.—Lady Wentworth forgot her diſpleaſure: ſhe flew to me in my diſtreſs, and ſtaid up two nights with me. Her tenderneſs on this occaſion has convinced me it is my happineſs ſhe ſeeks in all her wiſhes. I cannot be ungrateful to her, to you, and all my friends. No; I will this day write Captain Harley; if he ſtill perſiſts, after he has ſeen me, in requeſting my hand, I will not refuſe—at a proper time.

The dear, the good Louiſa, was not in bed for five nights. How kind is her every action; I really poſſeſs a treaſure in her friendſhip. Ungrateful as we are, we often repine at events beſt calculated for our happineſs. Had I not reſided in the convent at Abbeville, I ſhould never have known this moſt amiable woman.

I encloſe a copy of my letter to Captain Harley; my brother and ſiſter are pleaſed with it: they have ſuffered great anxiety from their viſit to me; I hope, therefore, I ſhall detain them longer than they firſt intended, eſpecially as Mrs. Oſwald is exceſſively fond of Madame Louiſa. Their mutual partiality is very natural, being countrywomen.

I have an anſwer from Captain Harley: he comes in a ſhort time with my friends. I ſhall not cloſe this letter until he has been here. The interview to me will be a painful one, but I cannot recede.

MRS. MENVILLE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

(ENCLOSED.)

Sir,

FEW things could give me pain equal to the knowledge that you are unhappy, and that *I* am the cauſe. I wrote you, I wrote my good friends, ſuch reaſons for declining the honour of your addreſſes, as I hoped would ſatisfy every one. To your candour, Sir, I am obliged; but my friends are diſpleaſed with me; I will not ſay they have *your* intereſt more at heart than *mine*, becauſe *I cannot* be convinced an union with me can be productive of real good to you; but you ſhall judge for yourſelf. I will no longer reſiſt the wiſhes, I may ſay *commands*, of thoſe ſo truly dear and reſpectable to me: if you can accord with my ſentiments; if you can bring yourſelf to view me in the light of a friend, I frankly own, it would be moſt deſirable to me; for I aſſure you, both my perſon and diſpoſition are altered for the worſe; and that I think there are very many amiable women, *one* in particular, not unknown to you, more calculated to make you happy than I can *now*. Conſider the malignant cenſures of the world; conſider that a wife of ſuſpected reputation muſt be ſunk in the eſteem of that world, whatever juſtice her friends may be inclined to do her; recollect it is not now Emily Oſwald, whoſe hand you wiſh for, but the degraded wife of Mr. Menville; neither young nor handſome, a widow, with a child, who will ever engroſs the

the chief part of her affections. Weigh all theſe conſiderations well before you ſee me, and then *you* ſhall decide for me.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obliged,

And obedient ſervant,

EMILY MENVILLE.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. MENVILLE.

DEIGN, Madam, to accept my grateful acknowledgments for your condeſcenſion and invaluable letter. I embrace with tranſport the permiſſion you have given me to wait on you; and I flatter myſelf I ſhall prove to you, that it is the mind, the virtues, the unequalled delicacy, and propriety of manners Mrs. Menville has ever poſſeſſed, that has claimed my adoration. If I loved the beautiful Miſs Oſwald, I admire, I adore the charming Mrs. Menville beyond all power of expreſſion. Sir Charles forbids me to ſay more. I ſhall ſoon be well; your letter laid on my heart will reſtore me to health and happineſs.

I have the honour to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Dear Madam,

Your obliged and devoted,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

I thought

I thought to have given you an account of my interview with Captain Harley, but am ſorry to ſay he is not in a ſituation to quit his room yet; I did think my friends exaggerated his illneſs; I find the contrary, and am greatly concerned. I hope, however, a day or two will reſtore him.

I have written a few lines to your worthy father. I cannot ſupport his diſpleaſure; and (be angry if you pleaſe) I muſt own his letter has had more weight with me than any thing elſe that has been offered on the ſubject.

My dear friend, oblige me with your company and Mr. Colemore's; my brother and ſiſter earneſtly requeſt it: do not deny us, but anſwer this letter in perſon.—My beſt compliments to all your amiable companions; and believe me ever,

Your affectionate and obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.

MY deareſt mother, we got ſafe and in very good time laſt night to Grove Houſe, and were received with tranſport by our dear friends. Mrs. Menville looks ill from her anxiety and fatigue, but her ſpirits are better than I have ſeen them theſe two years; and I doubt not but her looks will ſoon improve when her mind is at eaſe. The ſweet Emily is a lovely child; her perſon not the leaſt injured by her late diſorder. Madame Louiſa is very amiable and engaging: ſhe has a moſt perfect friendſhip for Mrs. Menville; who, indeed, that knows her, but muſt have the ſame?

Captain Harley has not yet made his appearance here: joy being almoſt as fatal as grief, brought on a return of his fever, and for two days he was extremely ill. He is expected tomorrow with the Wentworths.

This houſe is really a Paradiſe; the ſituation beautifully romantic. I am not ſurpriſed Mrs. Menville is attached to it. Mrs. Oſwald is very fond of her ſiſter, but more ſo of the amiable nun;

nun; and they both doat on little Emily.—I am interrupted.

I could not find time, my dear Madam, to reſume my pen until this evening. Our amiable friends have juſt left us, and carried off Mr. Colemore for a day or two. Sir Charles, Lady Wentworth, and Captain Harley came early in the day; Mr. Sackville is in town.

As they drove up the avenue Mrs. Menville was in tremors: I was apprehenſive ſhe would faint; but ſhe tried to exert herſelf. When they entered the drawing-room, Sir Charles led Captain Harley to her, whilſt Lady Wentworth embraced me. Harley bowed, kiſſed her hand, but ſpoke not: ſhe courteſied, and uttered a few words, not to be underſtood; but trembled ſo violently, that her Ladyſhip ran to her relief, and congratulated her on Emily's perfect recovery. This gave a new turn to her thoughts, and ſhe recovered her ſpirits. Harley overwhelmed the amiable Louiſa with compliments and thanks for her attention to our friend. She, I ſaw, was exceedingly ſtruck with his perſon and addreſs. Indeed, I never ſaw him look more engagingly agreeable, though evidently weak and languid.

After dinner we ſauntered away into the garden and orchard, and purpoſely contrived the charming couple ſhould have a tete à tete. I believe he pleaded his own cauſe pretty well, for when we met and returned to tea, I ſaw, by the animation of his countenance, he was highly delighted; and Mrs. Menville looked conſcious, but not *unhappy*. Before they left us, Harley contrived to whiſper in my ear, "My dear Mrs. Colemore, I have leave *to hope*; and that from your divine friend, is every thing I can wiſh for at preſent."

After

After they were gone, I congratulated her on the firſt interview, which ſhe ſo much dreaded, being over.

"I do indeed," ſaid ſhe, "feel myſelf lightened of very painful apprehenſions.—Poor Harley is but a ſhadow of himſelf; his fragile form and trembling emotions ſpoke more than volumes to my heart; that heart," added ſhe, faintly, "is a traitor after all; for it beat with too much violence at ſight of it old maſter, and convinced me, though we may ſuppreſs a flame, we cannot wholy ſubdue it."

"I then flatter myſelf," ſaid I, ſmiling, "I ſhall ſee you both happy."

"I wiſh you may," replied ſhe, ſeriouſly. "I have acceded to his and my friend's wiſhes, but I cannot ſay I am perfectly ſatisfied with myſelf, and that I think a bad ſign, for I have hitherto lived free from ſelf-reproach."

"Over delicacy only, my dear Mrs. Menville; and *that* is no virtue at all.—However, make yourſelf eaſy, under the certainty of having obliged all your friends."

"Do not, my dear ſiſter," ſaid Mrs. Oſwald, taking her hand, "do not judge me with ſeverity; every word you utter expreſſive of your diſapprobation of ſecond marriages, is a ſevere ſatire upon me."

"I beg your pardon, my deareſt ſiſter, but there is not the leaſt ſimilarity between your ſituation and mine; and therefore you cannot be affected by any reflections I make."

"Indeed, ſiſter," ſaid Mr. Oſwald, "I ſee not any reflections neceſſary, but what makes in Mr. Harley's favour; and he has my good wiſhes for his ſucceſs."

He then announced his intention of ſpending a week in town. His lady looked diſappointed, but

but prudently was ſilent. I fear ſhe cannot expect to keep him much with her in the country; and a town houſe would run them very ſoon into ruinous expences, ſhe muſt therefore ſubmit to little excurſions with the beſt grace ſhe can.

And now, my dear mother, I hope we may congratulate ourſelves that things are in a fair train for the happineſs of our friends.

Mrs. Menville has juſt left me. I read to her what I had written. She was ſilent for ſome time: at length, looking earneſtly at me, "You ſeem entirely to have forgotten the poor Mrs. Neville. What will ſhe think when ſhe hears I have permitted Captain Harley's viſits? Ah! Mrs. Colemore, I can never enjoy bliſs at the expence of another's feelings."

"I am perſuaded," replied I, "that ſhe has greatly ſubdued her attachment; for, from the moment you became a widow, ſhe looked forward to your union with Captain Harley; and I own, ſince ſhe came to Sudbury, I have always encouraged the idea out of kindneſs to her. I am ſure, therefore, ſhe will neither be ſurpriſed nor much affected at having thoſe ideas confirmed."

She ſhook her head; and requeſting her beſt love to you and all her friends, left me.——Fear not, my dear Madam, but ſhe will ſoon get over all her delicate objections.

My little George thrives exceedingly; he and Emily are mighty good friends in the nurſery.—My love and reſpectful duty to my father and friends; and I am ever,

Deareſt Madam,

Your obliged and affectionate daughter,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.

My dearest Madam,

ACCEPT my grateful thanks for your kind letter, it has had great effect on Mrs. Menville; my father's and your approbation of her compliance with all our wishes, has given her much pleasure. Also Mrs. Neville's behaviour, and subsequent address to you, reconciles her to think of her union with Mr. Harley with much less reluctance; she owns he is the only man on earth she could or would marry. I am glad to hear Mr. Martin is going abroad, there will be no impropriety certainly in his coming here to take leave of us, pray tell him we shall all be glad to see him. Mr. Oswald is in town, Sir Charles and Captain Harley are here every morning, and we meet every other day with Lady Wentworth, at our own house or her's. Mr. Sackville is returned,

turned, and out of his wits with joy, at the happy change of affairs here; he promiſes to accompany us back to Sudbury to ſee you, and viſit Mrs. Neville. We have at length prevailed on Mrs. Menville to promiſe, that ſixteen months from Mr. Menville's death, ſhe will give her hand to the happy Harley, conditionally, that he reſides at Grove-Houſe; you may believe there was no difficulty in obtaining that requeſt, or indeed any other, ſhe choſe to make. She ſaid yeſterday, I ſhall bluſh to ſee Mr. Martin, he will have reaſon to doubt the ſtability of womens' reſolutions.

"Oh! as to that matter," replied I, "you may depend upon having your credit ſaved; I ſhall inform him how very obſtinate you have been, and what a difficult taſk your friends have had to compel you to be happy."

Within another fortnight, my dear madam, we ſhall pay our reſpects to you and my father; Mrs. Oſwald will ſtay ſome time longer, as Lady Hartwill and her ſiſter are expected in about three weeks.

We have been greatly ſurpriſed this day, by a letter from Mr. Oſwald to his wife; he propoſes going abroad with Martin, for ſix or eight months; Mrs. Oſwald burſt into tears; her ſiſter requeſted ſhe would ſtay with her, and aſſured her Mr. Martin was a young man of ſuch good principles, that ſhe had nothing to fear from a connection between them, and as by that time her brother would be of age, they might ſettle comfortably in their own houſe.

"I fear," replied Mrs. Oſwald, "you muſt think very ſlightly of me, for marrying a man ſo much younger than myſelf, and on ſo ſhort an

an acquaintance; I never indeed conſidered the impropriety of it in ſo ſtrong a light, as ſince I have had the honour to know you ladies; but I had been ſacrificed by my parents, at a very early age, to a man old enough to be my grand-father; and after his death I was in a manner beſieged by his relations, and therefore was anxious to eſcape out of their hands: Mr. Oſwald's perſon and manners pleaſed me; I ſaw he would ſoon be ruined by the company he was connected with, and having, by means of a friend, gained a knowledge of his circumſtances and family, I own I encouraged, rather than depreſſed, his attentions to me. I hope, my dear ladies, if you think me reprehenſible for marrying, you will have no cauſe to reproach me for my ſubſequent conduct, which ſhall be ſtrictly conformable to Engliſh manners, and your examples ſhall be the objects of my imitation through life."

We were exceedingly pleaſed with this little account Mrs. Oſwald gave of herſelf, and warmly aſſured her of our eſteem and friendſhip—I muſt break off, our beaus are below.

On my entrance into the drawing-room, I ſaw a ſtranger, a very elegant man, whom Captain Harley preſented to me as Lord Trueby; I was ſurpriſed, though much pleaſed at ſeeing him. The death of an uncle, and an acceſſion to a large eſtate, has brought him to England, which he deſigns to quit again very ſoon. By accident he fell into company with Mr. Oſwald in town, and a gentleman preſent aſked the former, if Captain Harley was down at Sir Charles Wentworth's; on being anſwered in the affirmative, Lord Trueby enquired if Captain Harley was lately come from abroad, and gaining the information

information he wiſhed for, he ſet off yeſterday morning for Wentworth Park, and was detained by its hoſpitable owners, and introduced to us this morning. His Lordſhip is a moſt agreeable man, but there is an air of melancholy viſible in his deportment, which to us who knew his ſtory, intereſts one in his favour. Learning that Mr. Oſwald and Martin were going to the continent, he politely offered himſelf as a companion, if acceptable to them, which we ladies took upon ourſelves to anſwer would be highly ſo: and indeed I think his company will be a deſirable acquiſition to them in every reſpect. He appeared prodigiouſly ſtruck with Mrs. Menville, and congratulated Harley in my hearing, on his proſpect of happineſs.

I muſt now dreſs, for we are going under their eſcort to dine at the Park. No temptations, no arguments can induce Madame Louiſa to go beyond the environs of this houſe.

"No," ſaid ſhe to me, yeſterday, "no madam, I never can; I remember the ſolemn vow I made, of renouncing the world; in a ſelect ſociety, ſuch as viſit the charming miſtreſs of Grove-Houſe, I conceive I violate no vow, but theſe walls muſt be my boundary, nor will I ever ſee company beyond them."

I own I admire the propriety of her reſolution; adieu, my dear madam, for the preſent.

We returned from the Park too late laſt night, for me to reſume my pen; we ſpent a moſt agreeable day, and had the addition of Lord Longfield's company. He had generoſity enough to congratulate Harley, and has too much good ſenſe, I dare ſay, to give way to ſorrow, as he never

never had any hopes of ſucceſs himſelf. As to Harley, you never ſaw ſuch an alteration, he ſeems elevated beyond himſelf, yet his behaviour to Mrs. Menville is ſo diſtantly reſpectful, it is his eyes only that betray the ſecrets of his heart. I have this moment your ſecond letter, my dear mother, and am delighted with its contents; Colonel Huntley has offered himſelf to Mrs. Neville, and ſhe has not *poſitively* refuſed him; ſhe behaves properly; he is a worthy man, ſhe will have a protector for her children, and I hope, in due time, will accept of him; this will give great pleaſure, I am ſure, to my friend; I haſten to communicate the news.

I am, ever, dear madam, your

obliged, grateful and affectionate

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MISS NEVILLE.

I Thank you, my beloved Miſs Neville, for your obliging letter and congratulations. The perſuaſions of my friends, and the grateful affection I owe to Captain Harley, have induced me to recede from a reſolution I had formed, never to give my hand a ſecond time; having ſecured my dear Emily's fortune in ſuch good hands, I have nothing to reproach myſelf with on her account, yet at times I am not ſatisfied, for I ever had a great averſion to ſecond marriages, but I am told there are circumſtances which render them not only excuſable, but meritorious—perhaps we are eaſily perſuaded, when reaſon appears to ſecond the feelings of gratitude and eſteem. I rejoice to hear of the eligible offer Mrs. Neville has received, and if her heart accords with Colonel Huntley's wiſhes, I ſhall be very

very happy to congratulate her. I am now, my dear Miſs Neville, in the boſom of my friends; happy in the ſociety of thoſe I love, and though I look back ſometimes on the days of ſorrow I have paſt, yet the retroſpection affords ſome uſeful leſſons, which may influence my conduct for the remainder of my days. There are few things to be more guarded againſt, than improper female companions; an unprincipled woman may do a world of miſchief, and poſſibly, if I had been candid enough to have owned my diſlike of Miſs Shepherd when I firſt married, none of my ſubſequent misfortunes might ever have happened. There ought not to be the leaſt reſerve or want of confidence between man and wife; ſecrets on either ſide are ſure to be productive of miſchief and anguiſh. I now look forward to that peace and tranquillity, which has ever been my chief wiſh to procure; the tumultuous pleaſures of the gay world had never any charms for me; I can partake of amuſements, without being diſtracted after them; I love ſociety, but not a crowd of perſons I neither know nor care for; I like neatneſs and elegance of dreſs, but I hate finery; in ſhort, as Lady Grace ſays,

" I would never be dreſt out of the faſhion, though never the firſt in it;"

And I have no objection to enjoy every pleaſure of life among my friends, " ſoberly." Happily ſituated as I am among thoſe I love, poſſeſſed of a competency to the extent of my wiſhes, and bleſt with the approbation of thoſe whoſe good opinions ſtamp me into conſequence; I have only to be grateful for the bleſſings I enjoy, and deſerve a continuance of them, by diſpenſing to the worthy and unfortunate a ſhare of that property

perty which is more than ſufficient for all my wants, and can only afford me real happineſs, when I reflect that Providence has given me both the will and the power to be ſerviceable to others, not equally fortunate with myſelf. Misfortunes and diſappointments in our beſt wiſhes, my dear Miſs Neville, though painful, are yet neceſſary monitors ſometimes; they teach us to look within ourſelves for the origin of them; they ſubdue unjuſtifiable pride, and deſtroy that vanity and preſumption we females are but too apt to indulge; I ſpeak from experience, ſince I muſt confeſs, if I have acquired patience under ſufferings, wiſdom and ſelf-knowledge from adverſity, and an enlarged heart from difficult ſituations, I ought to bleſs the hand of Providence for giving me thoſe wholeſome leſſons, which alone can render my future life happy. Permit me to flatter myſelf, that if your amiable ſiſter accepts, as I hope ſhe will, the hand of Colonel Huntley, you will, *at leaſt*, divide your time between us; to draw a charming friendly ſociety about me is my principal wiſh, and from domeſtic pleaſures I hope to derive my future happineſs. Mrs. Colemore will very ſhortly be with you, let me not envy her, but ſoon aſſure me in perſon that I poſſeſs your eſteem and friendſhip. My affectionate compliments to Mrs. Neville, and believe me ever, my dear Miſs Neville,

Your ſincere and obliged friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.

YESTERDAY, my dear madam, we had a viſit from Mr. Martin, in conſequence of our letters to him and Mr. Oſwald; they have ſeen Lord Longfield, and ſettled every thing relative to their intended tour, which takes place within a fortnight; Mr. Oſwald returns here to-morrow. Martin behaved extremely well; I had half an hour's converſation with him before Mrs. Menville appeared; as he always ſuppoſed we ſhould ſucceed in our wiſhes, he neither looked grieved nor diſappointed, but ſaid 'Mr. Oſwald muſt be a comforter to Lord Longfield and myſelf, for I know his affection is little leſs than mine, but we both unite in our ardent wiſhes for the happineſs of Mrs. Menville.' He ſpent the day with us, but returned in the evening to town. Next Tueſday we ſhall ſet off for Sudbury, and hope

to find you and my father in perfect health. Lady Hartwill and her ſiſter are expected to-morrow; Mrs. Menville would not permit our departure until we had ſpent a few days with thoſe worthy ladies; I am prepared to reſpect them for their affection to our friend. And now, my dear mother, I cloſe up my correſpondence from Grove-Houſe, happy in the proſpect which opens for the felicity of our dear and valued friends, and convinced, that even in this world, real merit, and the ſtrict performance of our ſeveral duties, ſeldom fail of being rewarded; and that filial duty, gratitude, and ſelf-denial, are virtues which evermore obtains the eſteem and admiration of the worthy part of mankind, and ſecure to us ſelf-approbation, deprived of which, all the deluſive pleaſures of the world can never make us happy within ourſelves, or reſpectable in the eyes of others.

I am ever, my dear madam,

your obliged and affectionate daughter,

F. M. COEMORE.

CON-

CONCLUSION.

WITHIN the limited time Mrs. Menville had promiſed her hand to Captain Harley, he received the bleſſing ſo earneſtly coveted, from the hands of Sir Charles Wentworth, to the infinite ſatisfaction of their mutual friends; Mrs. Menville found in his ardent affection and reſpectful attentions, that happineſs ſhe had ſo long ſought for in vain; a happineſs which neither time nor accidents could diminiſh, becauſe founded on acknowledged merits, and thoſe amiable virtues which received ſtrength and permanency from practice, and a ſolicitude to render others as bleſt as themſelves. They had two children, and lived to ſee them, and the lovely Emily Menville happily ſettled; Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, and their other connexions, ever preſerved an uninterrupted friendſhip. Mrs. Neville was married to Colonel Huntley, and Miſs Neville having too much delicacy to accept of the ſeveral offers made her, divided her time alternately among her friends.

Lord Longfield, Mr. Martin and Mr. Oſwald returned from their tour, the two former perfectly cured of their paſſion; his Lordſhip ſoon

after married Lady Hartwill, whoſe many amiable qualities greatly overbalanced five or ſix years difference in their ages. Mr. Martin remained unmarried, but cultivated and obtained the eſteem of all his friends. Mr. Oſwald was, by the example before him, cured of his follies, and made his wife happy. What became of Mrs. Thurkill, was never known; but we may, without a breach of charity, ſuppoſe her vices rendered her a deſpicable object, and the end of her life (without repentance) muſt have been poverty, contempt and miſery. Her mother was fooliſh enough, on her return to England, to beſtow herſelf and fortune on a diſſipated young man, not worth a ſhilling.

The Oſſuana family kept up a conſtant correſpondence with Captain Harley, and rejoiced in his friendſhip; the lovely Antonia gave her hand to the Duke de Solis, and by ſo doing, made her friends happy as well as herſelf. She wrote a letter of congratulation to Lady Wentworth, on Mrs. Menville's marriage, which was highly gratifying to all parties. Thus, by a ſtrict rectitude of principle, by the obſervance of every moral obligation, and every practical virtue, the dutiful daughter, the affectionate ſiſter, the ſincere friend, and the obedient faithful wife, was at length rewarded for the performance of her ſeveral duties, by being united to a worthy man, whoſe whole ſtudy through life, was to make her happy.

FINIS.